



Yours affectionately
J. H. Jones

A COMPLETE
HISTORY OF METHODISM
AS CONNECTED WITH
THE MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

WRITTEN AT THE UNANIMOUS REQUEST OF
THE CONFERENCE.

BY REV. JOHN G. JONES,
A Member of the Conference.

VOLUME II.
FROM THE BEGINNING OF 1817 TO 1845.

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FOREWORD.

Two of the chapters of this History were lost by some one while in the custody of the late Rev. Dr. W P. Harrison, then Book Editor, at the time of the printing of Volume I. It is supposed that they were burned with the other manuscript of that volume; but why that manuscript was burned no reason has been given.

Rev. John G. Jones was one of the "old guard" of the Mississippi Conference, and knew most of the pioneer preachers personally and many of them intimately; besides, he had access to journals and records not within my reach.

These explanations will account for my paucity of information and the dryness of the chapters from my pen. With the materials in my possession I have done my very best, and commit my labors and myself to the brotherly kindness of my dear brethren of the Mississippi Conference, who received me on trial at Natchez December, 1883, and voted me into full membership at Meridian December, 1885, and elected me to elder's orders at Jackson December, 1887, bore with me and honored me, and with whom I labored till December 18, 1905, when I was transferred to the Indian Mission Conference.

T. L. MELLEN.

PREFACE TO VOLUME TWO.

After our explanatory preface to the first volume, we deem it unnecessary to add much by way of introduction to this. We still adhere to our original purpose not to encumber the work with marginal references, footnotes, and long extracts from other writers. We avail ourselves of all the reliable sources of information within our reach, and then write what we honestly believe to be true. In relating verbal conversations and narrations which have never been committed to writing, of course we do not pretend to give the precise words used by the speakers; but in every instance we endeavor to give truthfully the substance of what was said. We have constantly endeavored to avoid going too much into detail, aiming to select only representative characters and historical facts; but with the growth of the Church the materials have become so abundant that we find it difficult not to have "too much of a good thing." But if it is important to preserve the current history of the Church, which is made up of characters, facts, and figures, we cannot avoid some detail. We think, however, we have avoided repetition and tediousness. Our task, we think, is now two-thirds done; and should we be permitted to finish it, we shall rejoice that in the good providence of God it was assigned us by our brethren. It is both pleasant and spiritually profitable to spend the evening of life in reviewing the loving-kindness of the Lord to us as a people for more than threescore years and ten.

J. G. JONES.

Port Gibson, Mississippi, January, 1875.

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CHAPTER I.

1818-1824.

THE Mississippi Annual Conference, held at Midway Church November 7, 1817, selected "Ford's Meeting-house, Pearl River, Mississippi State," and "October 29, 1818," as the place and time for the holding of the next session. Nothing to the contrary appearing of record, it is presumed that the Conference met at the time and place appointed. Ford's Meetinghouse was the residence of the Hon. and Rev. John Ford, local preacher, and was built about 1811 or 1812. It was here that the Conference had met in 1814. The building still stands, and is practically in the same condition in which it was at the time of the session of the Conference. This house was notable in its day. Not only were Conferences held there, but also political conventions. It is related that once while Andrew Jackson was "laying out" or surveying the military or government road through Mississippi territory to New Orleans he asked for accommodations for himself and his companion officers for a week. Mr. Ford promptly replied: "Certainly, General, but on two conditions." "What are the two conditions, Mr. Ford?" "The first is that we hold family worship night and morning, and it is expected that every one sheltered under this roof be

present. And the second condition is this: I am told, General, that you are a profane swearer. If you are to be my guest, you must not take the name of God in vain while you are in my home." Both conditions were accepted by the General for himself and for his friends. For one week General Jackson was not heard to utter an oath. Bishop McKendree was severely ill during the whole session, and the meetings were held in his small bedroom.

The General Minutes do not disclose the Secretary's name.

John Booth and Wiley Ledbetter remained on trial. Thomas Owens was elected and ordained elder. Samuel Sellers and Ashley Hewitt were located, presumably at their own request. The statistics were as follows: Mississippi District, composed of Natchez, Wilkinson, Amite, Pearl River, Chickasawhay, Tombeckbee Circuits, reported a total of 1,846 white members and 389 colored members; and the Louisiana District, composed of Washatai and Attakapas Circuits, reported a total of 113 white members and 23 colored members.

These figures indicate an increase of 461 white members and a loss of 26 colored members in the Mississippi District, and a loss of 25 white and nine colored members in the Louisiana District.

The appointments for the ensuing year were as follows:

Benjamin Edge travels with Bishop McKendree.

Mississippi District.—Samuel Parker, P. E.

Natchez, John Lane, John L. McLendon.

Wilkinson, John Seaton.

Amite, Thomas Nixon.

Pearl, Miles Harper.

New Orleans, Mark Moore, Missionary.

Louisiana District.—John Menefee, P. E.

Attakapas, John Menefee, Thomas Owens.

Washita, John Booth.

Alabama District.—Thomas Griffin, P. E.

Tombeckbee, Thomas Griffin, John Murrow.

Whitesand, Wiley Ledbetter.

Chickasawhay, John Ira E. Byrd.

The names of the elders are italicized, and so continued to be printed for many years. It will be noted that New Orleans appears even now in the list of appointments, but only as a mission in the bounds of the Mississippi District. John Menefee was appointed in 1819, Benjamin M. Drake in 1824 and 1825, and Peyton S. Greaves in 1826, and thenceforward appointments were continuously made; but from 1820 to 1823 no appointments appear. For a most interesting account of the difficulties of establishing Methodism in New Orleans, see McTyeire's "History of Methodism."

The name of Samuel Parker, presiding elder of the Mississippi District, first appears on the Mississippi Conference roll the next year at the Conference held in Washington, Adams County, Miss., November 17, 1819, Bishop Enoch George presiding. He was reappointed to the district; but was sick at the time and grew rapidly worse after the adjournment of the Conference, and on the 20th of December, 1819, he died. His funeral sermon was preached the Sunday after his death in Washington by William Winans from Revelation xiv. 13. At the next session

of the Conference, held at Midway Church, Amite County, Miss., November 17, 1820, his obituary was read, from which it seems that he did not serve as presiding elder in 1818, and only reached the Mississippi Conference about the time of the Conference session in Washington in 1819.

In that class of 1805 admitted on trial in the Western Conference with Samuel Parker were Miles Hooper, Thomas Lassley, Caleb W. Cloud, and Benjamin Edge. Lassley and Cloud were sent to the "Natchez Country" some years before, and were mentioned in Volume I. of this history. Benjamin Edge, who was to travel with Bishop McKendree, did not tarry or receive an appointment in the Mississippi Conference.

Chickasawhay Circuit first appears in 1817 under the name of Chickasaw. When Elijah Gentry was put in charge of the circuit, in 1818, the name appears Chickasawhay, John Booth in charge, and under this last and proper name with John I. E. Byrd in charge, and continued under that name till 1890 or 1891, except occasionally it appears under the name of Winchester, when the name was changed to Leakesville. The original circuit extended very nearly a distance equal to the length of the stream under its various names; but gradually new works were formed and the cutting off process began at each end, until for a number of years it stood for only Greene County. At the time of the last change of name the Chickasawhay Mission seemed a hopeless case, and it was deemed a waste of domestic mission money to make further appropriations. A presiding elder was trying to reason with a man of some means

to get him, and through him others, to do better things for the support of the preacher. The layman said: "Brother —, I hold that this circuit pays out more money and gets less in return than any other charge in the Mississippi Conference." He was referring to the fact that the Chickasawhay Circuit was usually supplied by local preachers of limited education or ability, or the preachers in charge were very young men recently admitted on trial and sent to try to preach. He was not unmindful of the fact that some of these preachers did their very best, and developed eventually into preachers of no mean ability; but when sent to Chickasawhay Mission, they were just beginning, without experience. The next year an elder, a preacher of fair ability and a good singer, was put in charge of the mission under its new name, and after a year he was followed by an unmarried man of more than usual ability, and the Leakesville Circuit began to move forward. Two preachers are now on the circuit, and it is expected soon to divide the circuit and have two self-supporting charges.

At the Conference held in Washington November 17, 1819, Daniel De Vinne was admitted on trial. Wiley Ledbetter and John Booth were admitted into full connection. John Seaton was elected elder, but was not ordained until the Conference held at Washington, December 7, 1821. Wiley Ledbetter and John Booth at the Conference held at Midway, November 17, 1820, were for the second time elected deacons and admitted into full connection.

The statistics of membership reported at the Conference November 17, 1819, were: Mississippi Dis-

trict, consisting of Natchez, Wilkinson, Amite, Pearl River Circuits, with 1,051 white and 257 colored members; Louisiana District, composed of Attakapas and Washita Circuits, with 151 white and 32 colored members; Alabama District, composed of Tombeckbee, Whitesand, and Chickasawhay Circuits, with 968 white and 172 colored members.

It will be observed that a third district appears in which the membership far exceeds that of the Louisiana District and approaches near unto that of the Mississippi District.

The Conference for 1821 was once more held at Midway Church, November 17, 1820. Who was the secretary or who was the bishop or president in nowise appears in the General Minutes. The date and place are named in the General Minutes for 1820. In answer to Question 1, *Who are admitted on trial?* the names of Henry P Cook and Nicholas T. Snead are given. In answer to Question 2, *Who remain on trial?* the names of Thomas Clinton, Meredith Renneau, and Daniel De Vinne appear. *Who are the deacons?* is answered: "Wiley Ledbetter, elect; John Booth, elect." In answer to Question 7, *Who have located this year?* the names of "John I. E. Byrd, John Menefee, and John McLendon" appear. The statistics reported show another district and the following number of members: Mississippi District, composed of Natchez, Wilkinson, Amite, and Pearl River Circuits, with 1,075 white and 309 colored members; Louisiana District, composed of Attakapas and Washita Circuits, with 166 white and 29 colored members; Alabama District, composed of Whitesand, Chickasawhay, Tombeckbee, Alabama,

and Cochaster Circuits, with 1,190 white and 324 colored members; Cahawba District, composed of Franklin, Cahawba, Tuscaloosa, and Mariana Circuits, with 1,012 white and 44 colored members.

Growth is being manifested in all the districts.

The appointments for the ensuing year are:

Louisiana District.—Ashley Hewit, P. E.

Washita, Ashley Hewit.

Rapides, Thomas Owens.

Attakapas, Daniel De Vinne.

Mississippi District.—John Lane, P. E.

Natchez Circuit, William Winans.

Claiborne, John Seaton.

Wilkinson, Ebenezer Hearn.

Amite, Miles Harper.

Pearl River, John Booth.

Alabama District.—Thomas Griffin, P. E.

Whitesand, Henry P. Cook.

Chickasawhay, Wiley Ledbetter.

Tombeckbee, Meredith Renneau.

Cochnaker, Thomas Clinton.

Alabama, Nicholas McIntyre.

Cahawba District.—Thomas Nixon, P. E.

Cahawba Circuit, Thomas Nixon.

Franklin, Nicholas T. Snead.

Marion, ———.

Tuscaloosa, ———.

This is accompanied by a footnote from the editor's pen: "We have found many difficulties in the preceding Conferences, as in some instances the same names were reported in two or more places in the manuscript, and there was no mark to distinguish the elders. We have done the best we could without,

however, having reason to presume the minutes are correct."

Before adjourning the Conference elected Washington, Adams County, Miss., the place and December 7, 1821, was named as the time for the next session of the Conference.

Accordingly the session was held at the time and place appointed, it is presumable, since no contrary record appears. The writer confesses to dense ignorance as to who presided and who was chosen secretary.

William Alexander, Edmund Pearson, Armstrong I. Blackburn, and Eugene V Le Vert were admitted on trial; Henry P. Cook and Nicholas T. Snead remained on trial; and Thomas Clinton, Meredith Renneau, and Daniel De Vinne were admitted into full connection, and they and Barnabas Pipkin were ordained at that Conference, so a bishop must have been present. John Seaton, Ebenezer Hearn, Wiley Ledbetter, and John Booth were elected and ordained elders. This is further evidence of the fact that a bishop was present; but which bishop was it? There were only three bishops in those pioneer days—William McKendree, Enoch George, and Robert R. Roberts. Bishop Enoch George was, it may be stated with almost absolute certainty, the president. In answer to Question 7, *Who have located this year?* "the name of John Lane is seen;" and in answer to Question 8, *Who are the supernumerary preachers?* "appears the name of Thomas Griffin." The statistics show further growth in membership: Mississippi District, composed of the following circuits, Natchez, Claiborne, Wilkinson, Amite, and

Pearl River, reported 1,270 white and 502 colored members; Louisiana District, composed of the following circuits, Attakapas, Rapides, and Washita, reported 127 white and 39 colored members; Alabama District, composed of the following circuits, Whitesand, Chickasawhay, Tombeckbee, and Alabama, reported 1,710 white and 388 colored members; Cahawba District, composed of the following circuits, Franklin, Cahawba, Tuscaloosa, and Marion, reported 1,424 white and 91 colored members. No financial statements whatever.

For the year 1822 the appointments were made as follows:

Louisiana District.—Ashley Hewit, P. E.

Washita Circuit, Ashley Hewit.

Rapides and Attakapas, Henry P. Cook.

Mississippi District.—William Winans, P. E.

Natchez Circuit, John Seaton.

Claiborne, Ebenezer Hearn.

Amite, Daniel De Vinne, Armstrong I. Blackburn.

Wilkinson, Miles Harper.

Pearl River, Thomas Griffin, Sup., William Alexander.

C .

Alabama District.—Nicholas McIntyre, P. E.

Whitesand, Wiley Ledbetter.

Chickasawhay, Thomas Owens, Edmund Pearson.

Tombeckbee, Zechariah Williams, John Patton.

Alabama, M. Renneau, N. T. Snead, Peyton Greaves.

Cahawba District.—John Burrows, P. E.

Cahawba Circuit, Benjamin Drake, John Lambert.

Franklin, Barnabas Pipkin.

Before adjournment John McRay's, Chickasawhay River, was chosen as the place for the next yearly

meeting, and December 5, 1822, was announced as the time.

The appointments show quite a number of transfers to the Mississippi Conference, among whom was Barnabas Pipkin, who had been received on trial into the South Carolina Conference at Camden December 24, 1818, and admitted into full connection and ordained deacon at the session held in Columbia, S. C., January 11, 1821. In the memoir from the pen of the Rev. William H. Watkins, D.D., which appeared in the Minutes of the Mississippi Conference held at Hazlehurst, Miss., December 18, 1878, the following statements are made: "Barnabas Pipkin was born in North Carolina February 27, 1795, . . . and transferred to the Mississippi Conference in 1812. After a ministerial life of nearly sixty years, as pastor, presiding elder, and superannuated preacher, this venerable servant of God died at great peace at his residence, in St. Helena Parish, State of Louisiana, on the 11th day of May, 1878, aged eighty-two years. He was twice married—first to Miss Elizabeth Hanna, and secondly to Mrs. R. A. Bradford. Thrifty, frugal, and generous, his domestic life was one of great comfort and helpfulness, and the weary found a welcome and a resting place under his hospitable roof. He was a man of labor and of sacrifice for the Master's sake, strong in his purposes, quick in execution, and deep in his convictions of duty. His death was sublime. Conscious that he had approached the end of his journey, he looked back only to solace the sad hearts in his household and to send us greeting; then, waving his

hand in adieus, he passed through the gate and entered the city."

It will be noticed that the presiding elder of the Cahawba District was John C. Burruss, erroneously printed John Burrows, and the two preachers on the Cahawba Circuit were Benjamin Magruder Drake and John R. Lambuth. These names have contributed much to the history of Methodism, and the men deserve more than a passing mention. John C. Burruss was one of a class of fourteen admitted on trial into the Virginia Conference held at Norfolk, Va., February 20, 1814. His first appointment was that of junior or assistant on the Gloucester charge, in the James River District, and the next year he was returned to the same work as preacher in charge; but at the next Conference, held at Raleigh, N. C., January 24, 1816, he and six others were located, presumably at their own request. At the Conference held at Tuscaloosa, Ala., December 22, 1824, he was appointed President of Elizabeth Female Academy, Washington, Adams County, Miss., the *first chartered institution in the world* for the higher education of girls and young women. The next year he was returned to the academy presidency, and required "to devote as much of his ministerial service as may be consistent with his other avocations to the village of Port Gibson," which double appointment was continued two or three years. He continued at the head of the Elizabeth Female Academy for a number of years. His reputation was that of a scholarly man, a wise administrator, a strong, clear, forcible preacher, of striking person-

ality. No one questions his integrity of character or purity of life.

To the Reverend Bishop Charles Betts Galloway, D.D., LL.D., the writer is largely indebted for the following information about the "Elizabeth Female Academy, the Mother of Female Colleges," Volume II. "Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society," pp. 167-178: "The grounds and buildings were donated to the Mississippi Conference by Miss Elizabeth Roach in 1818, and in her honor the institution was called the Elizabeth Female Academy." The year following a charter was granted by the Legislature, and approved by Gov. David Holmes February 17, 1819. The academy opened its doors to pupils November 12, 1818, under the presidency of Chilion F. Stiles and with Mrs. Jane B. Sanderson as "Governess." The incorporators or trustees named in the act of incorporation were John Menefee, Daniel Rawlings, Alexander Covington, John W. Briant (Bryan), and Beverly R. Grayson, all of whom except Menefee were laymen.

Bishop Galloway quotes as follows from Dr. William Winans's manuscript autobiography:

Chilion F. Stiles was a man of high intellectual and moral character, and eminent for piety. The governess was Mrs. Jane B. Sanderson, a Presbyterian lady of fine manners, and an excellent teacher, but subject to great and frequent depression of spirits. This resulted, no doubt, from the shock she had received from the murder of her husband a few years previously by a robber. . . . Though a Presbyterian and stanch to her sect, she acted her part with so much prudence and liberality as to give entire satisfaction to her Methodist employers and patrons. Some of the most improving as well as the most agreeable hours

of relaxation from my official duties were at the Academy in the society of Brother Stiles, who combined in an eminent degree sociability of disposition, good sense, extensive information on various subjects, and fervent piety, rendering him an agreeable and instructive companion. He was the only person I ever knew who owed his adoption of a religious course of life to the instrumentality of Free Masonry. He was awakened to a sense of his sinfulness in the process of his initiation into that fraternity. Up to that time he had been a gay man of the world, and a skeptic, if not an infidel, in regard to the Christian religion. But so powerful and effective was the influence upon him by somewhat in his initiation that from that hour he turned to God with purpose of heart, soon entered into peace, and thenceforth walked before God in newness of life till his pilgrimage terminated in death.

Bishop Galloway continues:

Mr. Stiles was succeeded in the presidency by Rev. John C. Burruss, of Virginia, an elegant gentleman, a finished scholar, and an elegant preacher. The school greatly prospered under his administration, as it continued to do under his immediate successor, Rev. Dr. B. M. Drake, a name that will ever live among us as the synonym for consecrated scholarship, perfect propriety, unaffected piety, and singular sincerity. In 1833 Dr. Drake resigned the presidency in order to devote himself to pastoral work, and was succeeded by Rev. J. P. Thomas; and in 1836 he gave way to Rev. Bradford Frazee, of Louisville, Ky. Rev. R. D. Smith, well known throughout the Southwest for his rare devotion, was called to the president's chair in 1839.

Some of the by-laws adopted by the Board of Trustees for the government and regulation of the Academy recall, in a measure, the rigid and elaborate rules prescribed by John Wesley for the school at Kingswood. The spiritual culture of the students was the supreme concern of the faculty. The Bible was systematically taught, and

revivals of religion were enjoyed. A notable one occurred in 1826.

The coming of Mrs. Caroline M. Thayer, in the fall of 1825, was an epoch in the history of the Academy, and her administration marked an era. She was a remarkably accomplished woman, with a genius for administration. Of her Dr. Winans, President of the Board of Trustees, thus speaks:

"Monday, January 16, 1826.

"In the evening I returned to Brother Burruss's, where I met Sister C. M. Thayer, who has come to take charge of Elizabeth Female Academy. She is a woman of middle size, coarse features, some of the stiffness of Yankee manners, but of an intelligent and pleasant expression of countenance, free in conversation, and various and abundant in information. Rev. John C. Burruss, the President of the Academy, says: 'Mrs. Thayer is a most extraordinary woman. I have never seen such a teacher.'"

Mrs. Thayer was a niece of General Warren, the hero of Bunker Hill, educated in Boston, warmly recommended by Dr. Wilbur Fisk, and, before coming to Mississippi, had made great reputation as an author and teacher. She had taught for a while with Rev. Valentine Cook on Green River, Kentucky, and had published a volume of essays and poems that had attracted wide attention.

Concerning the location of the academy and the building itself, Bishop Galloway says:

The institution was located at Washington, six miles east of Natchez. Washington had been the brilliant and busy little territorial capital, and was then the center of social and political influence.

A recent visit to the site of that venerable school enabled me to gather much valuable information about its work, and heightened my appreciation of its vast educative and spiritual influence upon the history and destiny of the Southwest. The walls of the spacious building still stand,

but the merry voices that rang through its halls live only in the sweet echoes of a distant past. Borrowing a style of architecture from the Spanish of colonial times, the structure was two and a half stories high, the first of brick, the others of frame. A fire consumed it twenty years ago (about 1879 or 1880, having been used as a family residence by the widow and children of John W. Bryan, one of the incorporators of the Academy), leaving only the solid masonry as a memorial of the educational ambition and spiritual consecration of early Mississippi Methodism.

For many years the Elizabeth Female Academy was the only institution of high grade in the entire South for the education of the young. All others have been followers and beneficiaries of this brave heroine of Mississippi.

Benjamin Magruder Drake was born in Robinson County, N. C., September 11, 1800. When he was in his ninth year, his parents moved to the valley of the Green River, in Kentucky. On May 22, 1818, he was genuinely and thoroughly regenerated, and no room left for doubt. On June 7, 1819, he was licensed to exhort, and on September 18, 1819, he was licensed to preach, and was probably employed by the presiding elder, W. Gunn, on the Henderson Circuit. On October 4, 1820, he was admitted on trial into the Tennessee Conference and sent with S. P. V. Gillespie to Fountain Head Circuit. His health gave way, and he had to give up the work, and it was reported that "he had gone home to die." In 1822 Bishop Enoch George sent him to the Mississippi with a message to Rev. J. C. Burruss: "See that he wants nothing." On December 25, 1823, he was admitted into full connection with the Mississippi Conference, and elected to deacon's orders; and at the Conference held at Tuscaloosa, Ala., De-

ember 22, 1824, he was elected an ordained elder by Bishop Joshua Soule. He served stations and circuits the most prominent—Natchez, Washington, and New Orleans—and was more than once a presiding elder. He was in the presiding elder's office at the time of his death. The very night of his death he held family worship. One who knew of his life and labors in New Orleans and of his worth as a preacher wrote:

From house to house, where squalid poverty made disease and death more loathsome still, this angel of mercy was seen to pass at midnight and noon, administering aid to the body and comfort to the soul. Forgetful of himself, he prosecuted his godlike mission until he fell panting under the touch of the fiery scourge. But his high commission was not yet executed, and the Master raised him up to suffer on. Thrice did he bow under this scorching fever, and thrice did God restore him to health. But none of these things moved him, for he was not his own, and He who had called him to this work had become his "all in all." Truth and duty found him ever standing at his post, for he knew not danger and felt not fear.

Courteous, dignified, prompt, conscientious, he who should utter, though in a whisper, a suspicion of his lack of purity, integrity, courage, or fidelity as a minister and a man would betray a malignity which nothing but envy or jealousy could provoke.

In the pulpit his manner was always grave and dignified. There was no affectation, no coldness, no reserve. His lessons were read with solemn distinctness. His prayer seemed inspiration. His sermons were always replete with interest, sometimes tedious. His sentences, though never stiff, were never measured. (Extracts from Memorial Sermon by Rev. W. H. Watkins, D.D.)

In 1852 the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was worthily conferred on him by Centenary Col-

lege, Jackson, La. He married when young, and unto him were born a number of children, two of whom, William Winans Drake and James Perry Drake, became useful and honored members of the Mississippi Conference. At least three of his grandsons are now Methodist preachers.

At the Conference held in Natchez, Miss., December 25, 1823, John R. Lambuth was received into full connection and sent to the Tombeckbee Circuit, in the Alabama District, with Thomas Ledbetter assistant. The year before he served the Franklin Circuit, Cahawba District, with Peyton Greaves in charge; the year before he had been assistant to Benjamin M. Drake on the Cahawba Circuit, in the Cahawba District; at the Kentucky Conference held in Lexington, Ky., September 18, 1821, he, with twenty others, had been admitted on trial into the traveling connection and transferred to the Mississippi Conference. At the memorable Conference held in Tuscaloosa, Ala., December 22, 1824, he was sent to Attakapas, La., and the next year to Mobile Mission, Ala., where he did a fine work and laid lasting foundations on which others builded. He continued many years in the itinerancy, and ended his earthly career at his home, in Madison County, Miss., November 6, 1864. He was the father of the Rev. Robert W. Lambuth, who died June 16, 1867, an honored member of the Mississippi Conference, and of the Rev. James William Lambuth, D.D., who went out from the Mississippi Conference in 1854 as a missionary to China, and who many years afterwards was transferred to Japan, where he fell on sleep in Jesus April 28, 1892; and his body, always frail, yet

ever a miracle of endurance, sleeps in the cemetery at Kobé, awaiting a glorious resurrection. The Rev. Walter R. Lambuth, M.D., D.D., a native of China and for many years a missionary there and in Japan and now for some years the distinguished and enterprising Missionary Secretary of our great Church, is a son of Dr. James W. Lambuth, and of course a grandson of John R. Lambuth, the missionary to Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama.

At the Conference held at Washington, Adams County, Miss., December 7, 1821, Alexander Talley was appointed missionary to Pensacola, Mobile, Blakeley, and adjoining country; at the Conference held at John McRay's, Chickasawhay River, December 5, 1822, Ashley Hewitt, supernumerary, was appointed Conference missionary; at the Conference held in Natchez December 25, 1823, Henry P Cook was appointed missionary to Pensacola (Florida being delivered to the United States by Spain in July, 1821) and Wiley Ledbetter was appointed to the Choctaw Mission. These were the beginnings of missionary movements out from the Mississippi Conference. At the session held in Tuscaloosa, Ala., December 22, 1824, some converted Choctaw Indians were in attendance and were introduced to Bishop Soule, whose soul was deeply stirred within him. Standing erect in all his imposing stature, eyes filled with tears of joy, he cried out: "Brethren, the Choctaws are ours. No, I mistake; they are Christ's!"

That mission was prosecuted with great success, notwithstanding none of our missionaries ever acquired a sufficient knowledge of the language or dialect to preach in the language wherein the Choc-

taws were born. Rev. Cyrus Byington, born at Stockbridge, Berkshire County, Mass., March 11, 1793, was requested by the American Board of Commissioners in September, 1819, to take charge of twenty or twenty-five persons under appointment and on the way as missionaries to the Choctaws in Mississippi. His preparations were made in a few hours. By land to Pittsburg, then down the Ohio and the Mississippi to a point about opposite the juncture of the Tallahatchie and Yalobusha Rivers, and thence two hundred miles across the Yazoo Delta and the hills east to a place where they established headquarters and where they labored long and successfully, they came with the Indians to the territory. Dr. Byington reduced the language to a grammatical system; his seventh revision of his own work was edited by Dr. Byington and published in 1870 in the proceedings of the American Philosophical Society. No work of that sort was done by our Methodist missionaries. Yet God blessed our labors from the very beginning, and many of the uneducated sons of the forest were given as souls to our ministry of love and zeal.

The statistics for 1823 showed the following improved conditions in the Mississippi Conference: Louisiana District, comprised of the following circuits, Attakapas, Rapides, and Washita, reported 156 white and 98 colored members; Mississippi District, comprised of the following circuits, Natchez and Washington, Claiborne, Wilkinson, Amite, Pearl River, and Whitesand, reported 2,089 white and 877 colored members; Alabama District, comprised of the following circuits, Chickasawhay, Leaf River,

Tombeckbee, Cedar Creek, Conaco, and Alabama, reported 2,000 white and 396 colored members; Cahawba District, comprised of the following circuits, Cahawba, Tuscaloosa, Franklin, Marion, and Jones's Valley, reported 2,968 white and 425 colored members.

RECAPITULATION.

Members in Society this year: White, 7,213; colored, 1,796. Members in Society last year: White, 6,960; colored, 1,364. Increase this year: White, 250; colored, 432. Traveling preachers this year, 46; traveling preachers last year, 36. Increase this year, 10.

The statistics at the Conference held in Tuscaloosa, Ala., December, 1824, showed a still greater increase in members, but a decrease in preachers—only 41 preachers; 46 in 1823.

Question 13. *What members are in Society?* Answer: Whites, 8,024; colored, 2,000. Last year: Whites, 7,213; colored, 1,796. Increase: Whites, 811; colored, 204.

And “so mightily grew the work of God, and prevailed” (Acts xix. 20). “And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved” (Acts ii. 47). But the hardships endured, privations suffered, difficulties surmounted by those faithful pioneers, no pen can portray. “They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.” (Rev. xiv. 13.)

At that Conference at Tuscaloosa, Ala., December 22, 1824, five were admitted on trial: John G. Jones, John O. T. Hawkins, John P. Haney, William Spruill, and Samuel Davis. Nine remained on trial:

Thomas Ledbetter, Llewellen Leggett, John Cotton, James Nicholson, Thomas S. Abernathy, Robert L. Walker, Thomas C. Brown, Thomas Burpo, and John Collier. Seven were admitted into full connection: William Alexander, Jonas Westerland, Edward Harper, Elijah B. McKay, M. C. Henderson, William M. Curtis, and John G. Lee, five of whom—all except John G. Lee—were ordained deacons. Samuel Patton, Henry P. Cook, and Benjamin M. Drake were elected and ordained elders. Samuel Patton and Meredith Renneau were located.

Question 14. *Where are the preachers stationed this year?*

Louisiana District.—Ashley Hewitt, P. E.

Attakapas Circuit, J. R. Lambert.

Rapides, Jonas Westerland.

Washita, Thomas C. Brown.

Mississippi District.—William Winans, P. E., and Superintendent of the Choctaw Mission.

Natchez and Washington, Barnabas Pipkin.

Bayou Pierre, John I. E. Byrd, Thomas Owens.

Big Black, Llewellen Leggett.

Wilkinson, Francis R. Cheatham, William Spruill.

Amite, Thomas Clinton, John G. Jones.

Pearl River, Peter James, John P. Harvey.

New Orleans Mission, Benjamin M. Drake.

Choctaw Mission, Wiley Ledbetter.

John C. Burruss, President of the Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss.

Alabama District.—Ebenezer Hearn, P. E.

Whitesand Circuit, Elijah B. McKay.

Leaf River, Miles Harper.

Chickasawhay, Edward Harper.

Tombeckbee, Zachariah Williams.

Conecuh, John Cotton, Samuel Davis.
 Cedar Creek, J. Boucher, Thomas E. Ledbetter.
 Mobile and Pensacola Mission, Henry P. Cook.

Cahawba District.—Robert L. Kennon, P. E.

Alabama Circuit, Marcus C. Henderson, James
 Nicholson.

Cahawba, Hugh A. McPhail, John G. Lee.

Jones Valley, Edmund Pearson, Thomas Burpo.

Tuscaloosa, Robert L. Walker, John O. T. Hawkins.

New River, John Collier, Thomas S. Abernathy.

Marion, Peyton S. Greaves.

Tuscaloosa Station, William M. Curtis.

Alexander Sale and Benjamin F. Liddon transferred to the Tennessee Conference.

In closing this substitute chapter the writer would quote largely from the discourse of the late Rev. Dr. William H. Watkins on the "Life and Character of William Winans, D.D.:"

There is no more hopeful growth of Methodism as a great and expanding ecclesiastical system than what is discovered in the profound veneration which is cherished for the history and worth of the men who espoused "that form of sound doctrine" when no other motive was felt than that purest and sublimest of all impulses, "the love of Christ."

This record is not complete without the history of William Winans. He was born on Chestnut Ridge, Penn., November 3, 1788, and was the youngest of five children. He was of humble parentage, and was rather educated to labor for the daily support of a mother, who was widowed when he was only two years old, and others more dependent still, than to that mental training which his later years furnished. The iron districts of his native State afforded employment to youth, and here he acquired bread, but at the sacrifice of virtue. His ardent nature strove to excel; and, whether toil or recreation was the order, he toiled

with the strong or contended with the veteran for the mastery in the vices which custom had made familiar. He grew up a dissipated youth, little used to books, and little feeling the restraint which a pious mother's counsel and example should have inspired.

His mother's house was a preaching place—one of the domestic altars where the pioneer apostles met the neighbors and preached "Jesus on the resurrection" to a rude but willing people. They did something more than preach—they talked to the children and urged in private the great doctrines of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The names of some of these pious men were fresh in the memory of Dr. Winans amid the infirmities of age. They had shared his mother's hospitalities, and she and her children received their blessings in return.

At sixteen William became a member of the Church, and for a time gave proof of earnest seeking after God by diligent attendance upon all the rules [ordinances] of the Church. His impetuous nature, unsoftened by grace, could not resist the temptations of the world, and he was nigh to his undoing. He had neglected the means of grace, and the rigid administration of discipline denied him the privileges of the "love feast." Another might have grown resentful and permitted mortification to alienate him from God's people. Not so with young Winans. He felt the reproof and resolved to amend. Availing himself of the first opportunity to renew his vow, as soon as the doors were opened he entered and offered himself to the Church again.

About this time his mother moved to Ohio. William had been left behind to follow with others as soon as he had arranged some business. His trip down the river gave rise to an incident which by him was regarded as a special providence. He knew not at what point on the Ohio River his mother might have landed, and the boat in which he was descending the river was destined for New Orleans. He might not ascertain where his mother was. He might

be carried to New Orleans; inducement to vice might overcome his purpose. Many had been swallowed up in that maelstrom of vice, and he might be only another victim. The pilot of the boat, through carelessness, had offended the captain, and was displaced. The "hands" took turns in steering, and young Winans came to the helm. Totally ignorant of his duty, unskilled in that art, he would have been excused; but the orders were peremptory. Resolved not to be outdone, he grasped the "steering oar" and stood at the helm according to his lot. On a Sabbath afternoon, while he was "on duty," the boat floated near the shore, and he recognized a sister, who chanced to stand near the water's edge. It was the place of his mother's debarkation. His fears subsided, he was restored to his family, and most devoutly did he return thanks to God for his deliverance.

The pioneers of Christ's Church were already planting the gospel in the Northwestern Territory, and a society was soon formed—one member, young Winans. He was not yet converted, and some Calvinistic notions he had formed hindered a clear view of the plan of salvation—faith in Christ. These cost him some struggles. He set himself to work to find out the truth. He read and compared the creeds and confessions of faith, prayerfully sought wisdom from God, and finally settled down upon an Arminian basis. Soon after he was brought from darkness into light and from the power of Satan unto God. His conversion was clear, the Spirit's testimony complete, and the fruits of the Spirit were produced. He was at once made a class leader, and exercised his gifts as an exhorter and leader of prayer meetings. He had had no mental training, having been at school in all but a few months. He had, however, learned to read, and had acquired some knowledge of arithmetic, in which study he gave ample proof of that vigor of intellect which characterized his after life. To him mathematics had ever the attraction of novelty, and to his old age his mind seemed to luxuriate in the encounter of intricate mathematical difficulties. He

began to read and to love books. His mind stretched out toward knowledge, and the effort to attain gave food for its growing.

Already he had felt impressed with the conviction that it was his duty to preach. He had misgivings. Unschooled and inexperienced, *how* could he go forth to such a duty? Still he had it settled in his heart that duty should be done; and, after being duly recommended, he was received on trial into the Western Conference, at its sitting in Liberty Hill, in Tennessee, on the first day of October, 1808, and was placed on the Limestone Circuit, in Kentucky. At the Conference held in Cincinnati, October 9, 1809, he was appointed to Vincennes Circuit.

Methodism had been planted in the southern valley of the Mississippi in 1800 by Tobias Gibson, of the South Carolina Conference. Others had followed, but the extent of the territory was too vast to be supplied by them, and the enlarging field demanded additional laborers. The venerable Bishop Asbury presided over the Western Conference in 1810, and his pressing sense of the destitution of the "Natchez country" induced him to call for volunteers; for, with all the episcopal prerogative and power, no man is forced into so distant or dangerous a position. The call was responded to by Sela Paine and William Winans. The travel was by land in winter, and on horseback, the route lying through the several Indian tribes of Tennessee and Mississippi.

In 1813 William Winans was sent to New Orleans. The aggressive spirit of his denomination aspired to occupy that post; and though young, he was chosen the leader. [The missionary appropriation was \$30.] After sundry disappointments in regard to a public place for preaching, he hired a room and used it as a schoolroom and as a place of worship. The tender of his services as a school-teacher was to the effect that he could teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Alluding to the difficulty of his procuring a place for preaching, one individual exultingly said: "I am glad of it; for if you give the Methodists a

foothold, they are forever fastened upon you; for they will live on parched-corn and sleep on the bare floor, rather than give up an appointment."

In 1815 William Winans married Miss Martha Dubose, and located. His health having failed from a bronchial affection, he engaged in school-teaching, and continued in a local relation till 1820, when his health, restored, warranted his reëntering the itinerancy.

From that period until the time of his death he remained connected with the Mississippi Conference, enduring whatever of hardship was incident to his calling and performing an amount of labor almost incredible.

On the cover of a memorandum book for 1825 I find the following note in his own handwriting: "I have account of having read, since I began to travel, in 1808, up to this date (January 24, 1825), 318,095 pages of various sizes, from royal quarto to small 24mo, besides occasional reading, and many books of which I dare not set down the number of pages. This, of the books of which I have account, makes an average of 50 pages per day; and yet, alas! how little do I know! Of the above number of pages, 30,000 have been in the Bible and commentaries on that Book; but how little the profit have I secured!" He had read the Bible through *nearly one hundred times*; and he had kept a perfect diary from the time of his entrance into the ministry up to the June preceding his death, except the five years he was local, and an accurate copy [usually made with pen and ink] of all notes and letters written since 1819—an amount of systematic study and labor seldom equaled.

He was a man of firm physical constitution, of industrious habits, ardent temperament, and of remarkable power of concentrativeness. He saw things clearly and understood them well. Impelled by such a motive as ought to influence a minister of the gospel, the possession of those qualities could not but render him distinguished.

To many he seemed rough and severe, and some have been wont to produce a picture of him with the lines prominently drawn; but those who knew him well saw that those were

exhibited only as evidences of his unmitigated aversion to moral obliquity. Few men were more solicitous to enjoy the approval of his friends, and yet no man was ever more steadfast in his principles or more uncompromising in his adherence to what he believed to be right. His own obligations were met as far as he could meet them. Punctuality was his rule in all matters, whether the business related to his pecuniary affairs or to the interest of the Church. His own unavoidable failures made him considerate of others who tried and failed; but to fail from carelessness or indifference was, in his esteem, a crime, and the severity of his justice rebuked it as such. To a respectful opponent he was courteous, and yet he abated naught of dignity to win the praise of men. His age, his long-tried integrity, his unremitting sacrifice of health and comfort for the honor of Methodism and the glory of God entitled him to the confidence and veneration of the Church and the country. And he was ambitious to merit and enjoy them, grateful for their bestowal, but too noble in his nature to ask for them or to murmur if they were withheld. For more than thirty years he stood confessedly the leading spirit of the Mississippi Conference, and yet he bore himself with the meekness of a minister of Jesus—"pliant as willow, stately as a deer with antlers." From 1824 to the time of his death he had been a delegate to the General Conference, in some instances receiving the entire vote of the Annual Conference. Still he belonged to no party, nor stooped to the use of any art to procure his own election. He would have scorned the trammels of a faction; and, reposing upon the proud consciousness of his own integrity, he would have borne defeat rather than acquire promotion by management. Indeed, his whole life rebuked the restless spirit of vain ambition. He sought no place, he claimed no prerogative, he stooped to no cunning, he shrank from no duty. More than once the whole Church would have applauded the decision had the earnest desire of his friends been indulged by conferring upon him the dignity and functions of the episcopacy. More than ever the marked individual-

ty of the man came between him and this distinction; but not once did it occur to any man that William Winans lacked aught of purity, intelligence, or piety to qualify him for the high office.

Nor was he less a Methodist in discipline. The peculiarities of her polity, her itinerancy, her class meetings, and her simple forms of worship met the approval of his long life.

During the famous controversy which involved the presiding elder question, and which resulted in detaching many distinguished ministers from our Church, he stood firmly by the ancient landmarks; and although the position he then took brought him into collision with some of the first men of the Church—men who were too true to forsake her communion—he faltered not, nor yet boasted when time and experience demonstrated the soundness of the policy he had advocated. Nor did he prove himself less loyal to the Church or the constitution of the country in the great “abolition controversy.”

Again, in 1844, when the relation of Bishop Andrew to slavery was made the occasion for unscrupulous abolition violence toward the institution, no words of greater weight, no appeals of greater force, no warnings of more fearful potency, and no entreaties of more earnest spirit were made by any of that illustrious body than by Dr. Winans. He was a prominent and an efficient member of the Convention which met in Louisville in 1845 to organize the Church, South.

As a sermonizer Dr. Winans was remarkable for the clearness of his comprehension and the accuracy and distinctness with which he stated his propositions.

To him nature and revelation were always harmonious, and he shrank from no objection or apparent contradiction, however plausibly presented. He was searching for truth; and when once the vein was struck, he followed it.

His occasional sermons, which partiality sent to the press, were only fair examples of his pastoral discourses. Generally written after their delivery, they were rather the echo than the voice itself.

His volume of published discourses gives us a fair insight into the vigorous working of his more deliberate thought. A great body of divinity, it is a text-book for the theological student for all time to come. Besides these, he published several essays and reviews which do credit to his reputation. His scholastic training, as we have seen, had been neglected in his youth, but diligent study had so far repaired the defect that he was justly considered learned in English literature; and he spoke and wrote with great freedom, correctness, and force. His reading was extensive and varied. His vast store of historic information and the diligence with which he employed himself in the study of the science of government rendered him fully equal to the statesmen of his times. He was fond of politics, discussed measures of government freely, and was once prevailed upon to become a candidate for Congress.

The honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by Randolph-Macon College.

The piety of Dr. Winans was rather the deep-sea current than the rippling stream. Though ardent in his temperament, he was always self-possessed; and he seemed rather to walk with God and commune with him as a friend than to be carried only with occasional visions of his face. Unswerving in his religious integrity, half a century of deep and earnest piety had sanctified the whole man to fervent devotion to the service of God.

The closing scenes of his life were full of interest. He thought his work not yet done; and when the unutterable agony of months had changed his face and made it apparent to others that the end was nigh, he despaired not. He lay there calmly and bore his sufferings without a murmur. Bereft of the emotional rapture of religion, he saw the invisible, and his faith stood leaning on the word of promise. No shadow fell upon his path, though thorns and briars grew up in it; no doubt disturbed his mind, though a sword was in his bones. He had trusted God, and no confusion came. Often, as he had looked beyond the pe-

riod of his evil day and saw the nearing rest, would he exclaim, "Ah! that is the best of all!" He trusted for mercy alone in the great atonement, and no occasion was allowed to escape without his testifying that all his hopes centered there. Beneath the strokes which were beating down the body, the mind was sometimes seen to stagger, but it never fell; and his last conscious moments gave evidence that, while his mental vision was undimmed, his faith took hold upon the arm of God. As the sun went down on the third day of September, 1857, "he ceased at once to work and live." (Twenty-Fourth Sermon, p. 248, "Life and Labors of William H. Watkins.")

Quite a number of names have only been mentioned as connected with the Conference, received on trial, remaining on trial, elected deacons or elected and ordained elders, or located or otherwise disposed of. Their lives were no doubt replete with interesting incidents, if not with events of a thrilling nature; but of them it can only be recorded, "All these, having served their day and generation, fell on sleep."

The earliest copy of the Mississippi Annual Conference Minutes in my possession is dated 1839. The General Minutes had all the Conferences grouped in the answers to each minute question till the "Minutes of Conferences for 1824," and then the proceedings of the Mississippi Conference, statistics and appointments included, are allowed not quite one and a half pages printed. The names of presiding bishops are nowhere given.

CHAPTER II.

1825.

THE Conference convened in Tuscaloosa, Ala., December 23, 1824. Bishop Roberts took the chair and opened the Conference with the usual religious services, assisted by Bishop Soule. William Winans was again elected Secretary. After appointing the usual committees, the Conference proceeded with the regular minute business, and John G. Jones, William Spruill, John O. T. Hawkins, Samuel Davis, and John P. Haney were admitted on trial; Thomas E. Ledbetter, Robert L. Walker, Llewellen Leggett, Thomas C. Brown, John Cotton, Thomas Burpo, John Collier, Thomas S. Abernathy, and James Nicholson were continued on trial; Jonas Westerland, William M. Curtis, Edward Harper, John G. Lee, Elijah B. McKay, and Marcus C. Henderson were received into full connection and all ordained deacons except Edward Harper, who had been previously ordained as a local preacher, and John G. Lee, who was absent or else voluntarily declined ordination. By the request of Bishop Roberts, Benjamin M. Drake and Henry P. Cook were elected to elder's orders with a view to missionary work the coming year; Samuel Patton was also elected and ordained elder; Richard Pipkin was discontinued on account of ill health; Joseph Calloway, Daniel Leggett, and David H. Williams were also

discontinued; Robert L. Kennon, M.D., formerly of the South Carolina Conference, was readmitted in elder's orders; Meredith Renneau, Samuel Patton, and William Alexander were located at their own request. Nicholas McIntyre, while faithfully prosecuting his work as presiding elder on the Alabama District, had fallen at his post with sword in hand. The following local preachers were elected to deacon's orders: Elijah Myers, Stephen Box, Frederick Weaver, and Elisha Turner. Eugene V. Levert was also elected to deacon's orders upon the ground that he had been a preacher four full calendar years, though a part of that time he had not been in the itinerancy. James Tarrant was elected to elder's orders; Alexander Sale and Benjamin F. Liddon were transferred to the Tennessee Conference; and though we find no record of the fact, Daniel De Vinne, who had been elected one of our delegates to the late General Conference, after attending the Conference, declined returning to the Mississippi and obtained a transfer to the New York Conference. We received by transfer from the Tennessee Conference Hugh A. McPhail in elder's orders. He was a valuable accession.

There was some difficulty in passing the characters of one or two young men on account of alleged imprudences; with that exception, upon strict examination, the preachers were found to be "blameless in their life and official administration." Benjamin M. Drake brought up the subject of parsonages again; but after some discussion, the matter passed without much being determined except a faintly expressed resolution to try. The truth was, the great

majority of our pastoral charges were only in a formative state, and the preachers saw that the time had not come to locate parsonages.

The plan for collecting missionary money was re-adjusted, and the preachers pledged a cordial support to our Church missionary enterprises. The Conference received notification from the Tennessee Conference that that body had abandoned the project of establishing our joint seminary of learning at Courtland, Ala., doubtless in view of seeking a more eligible location.

William Winans was "continued as the agent of the New Orleans Meetinghouse business." The struggle to establish Methodism in that demoralized and wicked city had been long and discouraging; but there was a growing determination never to abandon the enterprise, and from that date our prospects have grown brighter until the present day.

After an unusually long session, Conference adjourned on Thursday evening, the 30th, appointing its next session to meet at Washington, Miss., December 8, 1825.

Few appointments were made requiring any special notice. Ashley Hewitt succeeded Ebenezer Hearn on the Louisiana District, and Mr. Hearn was appointed in charge of the Alabama District. Robert L. Kennon took the place vacated by the transfer of Alexander Sale on the Cahawba District. The town of Tuscaloosa was made a station with William M. Curtis in charge. Bayou Pierre Circuit was divided; and the northern part, including Warren and the northern part of Claiborne and some new settlements in Hinds County, was called Big Black. Henry P.

Cook was returned as the missionary to Mobile and Pensacola, Benjamin M. Drake was appointed to the New Orleans Mission, Wiley Ledbetter was continued on the Choctaw Mission, and John C. Burruss was reappointed President of the Elizabeth Female Academy.

The late General Conference established as the boundary line between the Tennessee and the Alabama part of the Mississippi Conference the chain of mountains which separate the waters running into the Mobile Bay from those emptying into the Tennessee River. This took from our Conference two of our best circuits, Lawrence and Franklin, with an aggregate membership of 864. We gave up our portion of the beautiful and fertile valley of the Tennessee River, with our large membership there, with some reluctance; but the government had lately purchased a large scope of country in Central Mississippi from the Choctaw Indians, which was being settled rapidly; so we still had more territory than ministers to occupy.

The reports from the work were truly encouraging, considering how much only partially settled country we were occupying. Our next increase was eight hundred and eleven white and two hundred and four colored members, giving us an aggregate of eight thousand and twenty-four white and two thousand colored members, with forty-one traveling preachers.

Rev. Nicholas McIntyre, whose death has been noted, was of Scotch parentage, and was born on the Atlantic Ocean during their voyage to America in October, 1790. They landed at Wilmington, N. C., and settled in Cumberland County, near Fayette.

ville, in 1795. They removed to South Carolina and settled in Chesterfield District. His parents were members of the Presbyterian Church, and in accordance with a very praiseworthy characteristic of that Church persisted in "bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Their teaching and example had a restraining influence on their children, though their public religious privileges were very limited. In 1808 the father died. The morning previous to his death he called his children to his bedside, and in a very affecting manner gave them his dying charge and prayerfully commended them to God. Nicholas manifested considerable reluctance to come into his father's presence at this solemn time; but being called by name, he approached. Taking him by the hand, his dying father told him of his faults and exhorted him to forsake his wicked associates and serve the Lord and to attend diligently to his business and help his mother provide for the family. Soon after the old servant of God died.

The exhortation and happy death of his father had a very salutary effect upon Nicholas. There was from this time an evident effort to reform his conduct and a gradual avoidance of all wicked companions. In 1810 he was induced to attend a camp meeting in Rockingham County, N. C. His perplexed and penitent heart soon found itself in full sympathy with the preaching of the Methodists, the result of which was that he obtained an assurance that his sins were all forgiven, and at once joined the Church, and returned home from camp meeting a happy Christian. For the next two years he remained with

his mother, diligently assisting her in providing for her family and faithfully attending to his Christian duties. In the meantime he became more and more interested for the salvation of sinners, which resulted in a settled conviction that he was called of God to preach the gospel. On this point he had a sore conflict with the enemy of souls. He was often "in great fear where no fear was." His mother could not well spare him, and might even oppose his preaching. He had not the requisite qualifications for a minister.

Still the duty of preaching filled all his thoughts, and he began to lose all interest in every other contemplated enterprise. Sorely oppressed in mind, he determined to unbosom himself to Rev. Wiley Warnick, his pastor. Mr. Warnick encouraged him to commence the work without further hesitation. His mother found out the exercises of his mind, and so far from opposing him gave him up freely. He was licensed to preach, and at the session of the South Carolina Conference held in Charleston January 12, 1814, was admitted on trial and appointed to Apalachee Circuit as the junior of Epps Tucker. After getting fully committed to his work, which lay in Georgia, he wrote to one of his brothers in the following language: "I thought I enjoyed religion when I was at home, but it was only a taste of what I now feel from day to day of the presence of God. When I came here, I was a stranger to all, and all were strangers to me; but they were not strangers to God. I found fathers and mothers in Israel, whose doors were opened to receive me and whose hands were ready to supply my wants."

He traveled six different circuits in the South Carolina Conference acceptably and usefully, though two years of the time his movements were interrupted by ill health. In 1820, with Thomas Clinton, he was sent as a missionary to the Mississippi Conference, where he endured all the exposures and privations of a newly and sparsely settled country, and did a vast amount of traveling and preaching—two years on large circuits and the last three on the Alabama District. He was everywhere fully reliable, acceptable, and useful. On Thursday, July 28, 1824, he was brought to a camp meeting on the Alabama Circuit in a carriage, being too unwell to ride on horseback. He was most of the time confined to his bed; but on one occasion he ventured to the stand, where he was able to stand only long enough to say: "Perhaps the greatest sermon I could preach would be to say to the Christians present, 'Love one another.'" He then sat down a few moments, but was soon compelled to retire to his tent and bed again. A physician was called in, and pronounced his case dangerous. When the camp meeting closed, he was taken about a quarter of a mile to the home of a Brother Stone, where he received the most affectionate attention both from the family and physician, and for a few days hopes were indulged of his recovery; but they were soon found to be delusive. His fever took on the typhoid form and became uncontrollable. Much of the time he was delirious, but in his lucid moments he expressed his unshaken confidence in being prepared for heaven; and while he expressed a desire to live that he might prosecute the great work in which he was engaged;

he felt perfectly resigned to the will of God. In his seasons of delirium he imagined that he was engaged in the public administration of the word and ordinances of God. Now he would repeat the ceremony of giving the elements in the Lord's Supper, and then he would go through the form of dismissing a congregation with the apostolic benediction. On Sunday, the 15th of August, 1824, he ended his earthly pilgrimage. His brethren loved him dearly and mourned over his early death; but they had the sweet assurance that their loss was his gain. His talents were not brilliant and showy, but he was a very clear and forcible expositor of the great cardinal doctrines of the Bible as understood by our Church. He was an excellent disciplinarian, and urged upon those under his pastoral care the great importance of conforming literally to the General Rules of the Church. We hope the Alabama Methodists will keep the place of his interment distinctly marked, that passers-by in coming generations may know where to find the grave of the noble young minister who left the home of his youth to assist in preaching the gospel to our scattered and destitute population.

Our transfer from the Tennessee Conference in the person of Hugh A. McPhail was highly prized. He was admitted into the South Carolina Conference in 1812, and after traveling there four years he appears on the roll of the Tennessee Conference, where he traveled two years and located. Late in the fall of 1824 he was readmitted into the Tennessee Conference, and immediately transferred to the Mississippi Conference, where he traveled four years in

the Alabama part of the Conference. He was superannuated one year, and then located at his own request on account of bodily weakness. He was a man of ardent temperament, full of faith and zeal, of good, solid, useful talents, and was instrumental in adding many souls to the fold of Christ wherever he labored. He was a member of the Masonic brotherhood, and during the great anti-Masonic excitement in Alabama from 1826 to 1830 he met with some sore trials. This no doubt, to some extent, grew out of his naturally impulsive temperament and his disposition to present a bold front to the opposers of the craft. In some places they not only threatened to close the doors of their churches against him, but it was actually done in one or two instances. Several others of our leading ministers in Alabama were also advanced Masons; but they were prudent and nonresistant, and withal so attentive to their ministerial obligations that they met with little opposition. Hugh A. McPhail has long since gone to his reward above.

The readmission of Dr. Robert L. Kennon was a great acquisition to our Conference. He was a native of Granville County, N. C., and was born in 1789. He was one of three brothers who entered the South Carolina Conference, each of whom was a preacher above mediocrity. Robert was converted when about eleven years old, and immediately became active in the revival movements of the Church. At that early age he was found in the altar encouraging and praying with the seekers of religion. His parents were members of the Church and remarkable for their consistent and deep piety. His

mother died when he was young; but as far as possible her place was supplied by an elder sister, who watched over him with prayerful solicitude.

When only twelve years old, in the absence of his father, he led the devotions of the family in evening and morning prayers. His father determined to have him well educated, and placed him in some of the higher schools within his reach. While pursuing his academic course he lost in a measure his spirituality and active zeal in the service of God; but he soon became alarmed at his evident declension, and returned to God with penitence and prayer.

In the meantime the family moved to Georgia. In 1809 he was admitted into the South Carolina Conference, which then included the State of Georgia. He traveled four years in that Conference with marked acceptability and very encouraging results, when there was such a failure in his lungs as compelled him to desist. He then turned his attention to the study of medicine; and after graduating as a physician, he first settled in the practice of medicine in Columbia County, Ga., where he was very popular both as a physician and local preacher. In the meantime he had married Miss Martha Bush, of Warren County, Ga.; and in 1819 he removed to Alabama and settled in the young but rapidly growing town of Tuscaloosa, where he soon became very popular as a Christian, preacher, physician, and citizen. His health had improved very much.

He had given up a very lucrative practice from a conviction of duty to devote his time, talents, and labors to the salvation of souls. He was about five feet eight or nine inches in height, slender, erect,

sinewy, and active. His hair was light, his complexion fair, and his eyes blue, which gave him a youthful appearance quite beyond the middle of life. He had a well-chiseled Grecian face, his forehead and nose being almost in a straight line. His countenance indicated high intellectual culture, social refinement, and the outbeaming benevolence of a pure Christianity. He was about the most perfect embodiment of a cheerful brotherly kindness we ever met. There seemed to be nothing wanting in true, manly, and ministerial dignity about him. Without seeking it, his natural position in domestic and social life, in the pulpit, and in the Conference was deservedly the most commanding. He was indeed a great man and a prince in Israel. And yet, with all these qualities, he was what we usually call an old-fashioned Methodist preacher, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. His eloquent and powerful sermons at times produced a wonderful effect. Christians shouted, penitents wept and prayed for mercy, newly awakened sinners trembled, and those determined not to yield hastened from the excitement.

The writer appears in the Journal as first on the list of those admitted on trial at this Conference; but if a biographical sketch of him is ever written, it will be written by another hand. As his classmates, for whom he cultivated true Christian and ministerial brotherhood, are all dead, he proposes to write a short tribute to the memory of each of them. When we had graduated to deacon's orders, including some transfers of the same grade from the Tennessee Conference, there were eight in the class, including Samuel Davis, and nearly all of them died

comparatively early in life. They have gone before to the place the Saviour had prepared for them, and we are still following on. We expect to overtake them before long.

The writer first became acquainted with William Spruill at a camp meeting held late in the fall of 1822 on the land of Archibald Lewis, near Washington, Miss. He had a fair English education; and being a close student, he rose rapidly in the ministry. From the first he took a high stand in personal piety, and soon displayed a mind of the first order. His third and fourth years he was stationed in the city of Tuscaloosa. The latter part of his fourth year his health so completely failed that he was placed on the superannuate roll. At the end of one year he requested to be located, as his health had not been restored and he was unwilling after so short a career in the itinerancy to be continued on the superannuated list. We gave him up with great reluctance, for he was one of the most promising young men of the Conference. In hope that a change of location might improve his health, he went to Kentucky, where in a short time he finished life's weary journey in peace and holy hope.

Of the early history of John A. J. Hawkins, we remember nothing except that he was brought up by a good Methodist mother. He came recommended from the Alabama District, and was favorably represented as a promising young man. He soon took a high stand as a man of great warmth and commanding talents in the pulpit. He was tall, muscular, well proportioned, and a noble-looking man. In his temperament he was sanguine and impulsive. He

was a close student; and having a clear and comprehensive mind, assisted by a very tenacious memory, he made rapid progress in his theological studies, so that we soon acknowledged him to be at the head of our class of eight. In point of pulpit eloquence he was quite above mediocrity. He had a good voice, and his enunciation was very distinct, though rapid and impassioned. His style was unusually elevated for a young minister, and this, assisted by a remarkably reliable memory, enabled him, when his fancy led him that way, to make long verbal quotations from such works as Pollok's "Course of Time," Irving's "Orations," etc., without any, except those very familiar with the authors quoted, knowing where the quotation began or ended. At the end of his second year Dr. Talley, the presiding elder on the Louisiana District, was very anxious to get a suitable young man for the Attakapas country. After becoming acquainted with the history and talents of Mr. Hawkins, he said to the bishop and his council: "Let me have him for the Attakapas Circuit. His commanding talents will attract the attention of those fastidious people, and his faithful and direct appeals to the wicked, accompanied with such a spice of fire and brimstone, I trust will awaken them from their long and deathlike sleep in sin." While on that heavy work in that humid atmosphere his health so declined that he was placed on the supernumerary list and stationed in Port Gibson the ensuing year. Here he succeeded in carrying out a plan previously projected of building the first brick church in Port Gibson—in truth, the first church of any kind ever erected in that town,

the courthouse having been used up to this date as a preaching place by all denominations. As our Church at this time was small in Port Gibson and most of the members in very moderate circumstances, this church was mainly paid for by the members and patrons of the Church in the surrounding country.

In the fall of this year (1828) Mr. Hawkins married Miss Rhoda Robinson, an amiable and pious lady, who shared his fortunes until his tragic death in Kentucky in 1841, after which she returned to Port Gibson, renewed her connection with the Church here, and still lives among us in lonely widowhood, a pattern of industry and piety, and much beloved and respected by the few friends of her youth who yet survive.

Times were now prosperous in Mississippi, and fortunes were easily and rapidly acquired. While men of far less talents were growing rich around him, Mr. Hawkins allowed himself to feel unwilling to remain poor and dependent solely on a small and uncertain salary for the support of himself and family. In view of this, he purchased a drug store in Port Gibson, and asked for a location at the ensuing Conference. He remained in Port Gibson in 1829, and as a local preacher continued to preach in the surrounding country with his usual acceptability. His anticipations, however, were not realized in his secular business, and he removed to Vicksburg, where he continued the drug business a short time and also purchased a cotton plantation on credit.

In the meantime Vicksburg had been added to the

list of our city stations, and in 1831 Mr. Hawkins was employed by Rev. Thomas Griffin, the presiding elder of the district, as its first supply. He was very acceptable both as a preacher and pastor, and was conscientious in the discharge of his ministerial duties. Toward the close of the year he saw that his secular business was getting into a very unsatisfactory condition. His anticipations had not been realized, his creditors began to urge their claims, and those who had indorsed for him began to feel uneasy. Three years' experience in secular life satisfied Mr. Hawkins that he was not in his proper element, and he determined to resume his place in the itinerancy. He accordingly put all his assets in liquidation to save if possible his creditors and securities from suffering any loss on his account. While the process of liquidation was going on he was readmitted into the Conference, and was returned to Vicksburg in 1832 and stationed in Natchez in 1833.

By the end of this year he realized the fact that he was deeply involved in debt; his health was feeble, and he became the prey of discouragement and dejection. He again located and determined to go to Kentucky and study medicine. As soon as his pulpit abilities became known among the Kentucky Methodists they were in great demand, and he was considered second only to such ministers as H. B. Bascom, H. H. Kavanaugh, and George C. Light. After completing his preparatory studies as a physician, he settled in Mercer County, Ky. (we believe in the town of Harrodsburg), where he formed a partnership with Dr. Robert Nelson, and was grow-

ing in popularity as a physician at the time of his tragic death.

Mr. Hawkins was a man of ardent temperament, and no doubt sometimes provoked opposition from those who differed from him in opinion, where a more reticent course would have been the better policy. He also suffered himself to be made prominent as a politician, and his popularity, either as a physician or a politician or both combined, excited the envy and hatred of some cowardly assassin, who waylaid and shot him dead on the road.

Some unknown admirer of Mr. Hawkins published a just tribute to his memory in one of the secular papers, from which we make a short extract, setting forth the immediate circumstances of his death :

Departed this life on Monday, 27th of April, 1841, in Mercer County, Ky., in the fortieth year of his age, Rev. John O. T. Hawkins, M.D.

The circumstances which led to the death of this amiable man and talented physician are truly appalling. He left home on Sunday in the discharge of his professional vocation to attend upon the calls of suffering humanity. After having discharged his duties, he was returning to the bosom of his family, on Monday, when he was suddenly cut down by the unseen hand of the lurking foe, unconscious of the danger that awaited him. Thus in the prime of life, in the vigor of manhood and buoyancy of hope, is destroyed one who was an ornament to his profession, and who might, had he lived, been of incalculable benefit to the community.

So far as we know, the assassin was never legally detected and brought to justice. Had Mr. Hawkins devoted his commanding talents and untiring industry exclusively to his holy calling as an itinerant minister, he could hardly have fared worse or died

poorer, and his valuable and useful life might have been greatly protracted. He was to us a brother beloved, and we will cherish his memory.

Little is known of the early life of John P. Haney except that he was a native of Tennessee, embraced religion in 1821, and had few educational advantages. The family had moved to Alabama. He was recommended from the Alabama District to the Annual Conference. The first year we traveled adjoining circuits, he being the junior preacher on Pearl River and the writer on Amite Circuit. His broad, open, benevolent, and earnest countenance, in connection with his easy-flowing and manly voice, made him attractive in the pulpit. But his great excellence was in the holy unction that everywhere attended his ministry. He was most successful in winning souls to Christ. By the close of 1826 a sufficient population had accumulated in St. Tammany Parish, La., to justify an effort to form a circuit in that region, embracing the settlements west of Pearl River and along the coast of Lake Pontchartrain.

Bishops Roberts and Soule were both present at the Conference held in Tuscaloosa December 14-21, 1826. Bishop Soule was the embodiment of episcopal dignity, and seldom, if ever, indulged in anything like humor in connection with the business of an Annual Conference. Bishop Roberts was smartly spiced with innocent and useful wit and humor, and often in this way poured oil on the troubled waters of an earnest debate or relieved the embarrassed feelings of some timid member. At the close of this Conference Bishop Soule was reading out the appointments with his usual deliberation and em-

phasis, with Bishop Roberts sitting complacently at his side. The large class of single young men then in the Conference were listening with much anxiety to hear their destiny for the next twelve months (it might be anywhere between the Chattahoochee on the east and the Sabine on the west), when Bishop Soule in measured tones read out: "St. Tammany, John P Haney." Quick as thought Bishop Roberts looked complacently at the appointee and remarked: "Why, Brother Haney, they have sent you to the jumping-off place!" A smile pervaded the Conference, the stricture was taken off our palpitating hearts, and we were permitted to take a new start in listening to the further revelations of what some of the young preachers called the "book of fate."

John P. Haney as a dutiful son in the gospel went to the "jumping-off place," and as the result of his organizations and net gains he reported to the next Conference one hundred and twenty-eight white and thirty-four colored members. While on this circuit, in the fall of 1827, Mr. Haney married Miss Nancy Warner, one of the lovely and pious twin daughters of Hon. Thomas C. Warner, of Washington Parish, La., heretofore mentioned in this history. Mr. Haney continued to labor with almost universal acceptability and marked success on those large pine woods circuits in the lower valley of Pearl River until 1831, when he was appointed to Amite Circuit. Here in the latter part of September, on his way home after a round on his circuit, he was taken with a fever, and on the 3d of October, 1831, he peacefully fell asleep in Jesus, strong in faith and full of a glorious hope of a happy immortality. His widow

is yet alive. His daughter is the wife of Rev. Thomas Price, who has long been a member of the Mississippi Conference.

• The writer had been employed by William Winans, presiding elder of the Mississippi District, in the fall of 1824 to supply a vacancy on Amite Circuit, and, fortunately for him, was continued there in 1825 as the junior of that good and faithful little man, Thomas Clinton. This we have ever remembered as the happiest year of our itinerant life. We were free from all secular business and worldly cares. Our faithful colleague attended to all the disciplinary affairs of the circuit, except that he required us to "read in every Society the sermon on evil-speaking," while he did the same with the "thoughts on dress," as was then required by the laws of the Church. He also apportioned to us a part of the circuit, to look after the absentees from class meeting and public worship, which proved an excellent training school to us in pastoral visiting. He "attended to everything, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline," and taught us to do the same.

The original circuits had been divided so that they were not so large as formerly. Our circuit was only about three hundred miles round, to be compassed every twenty-eight days. As we were a tender youth, our colleague permitted us to have only twenty-four regular appointments in one round, with a few night meetings thrown in for good measure, while he sometimes increased his to thirty-two or three. We had entered the work from an imperious sense of duty, but with very discouraging prospects of being useful. We, however, soon felt that God was with us

in the pulpit, in the class and prayer meetings, and in our pastoral visitations; so that before the year closed we had become somewhat of a revivalist, and witnessed the conversion of many precious souls, especially among the young people. The Societies on Amite Circuit were largely composed of the most substantial material. There were men and women who have seldom been surpassed for depth of piety and active zeal.

Want of space will not allow us even to record the names of many of those who were the brightest ornaments in the Church. In the Mississippi part of our circuit we recollect with glowing pleasure the names of Felder, Sandell, McMorris, Hezekiah and Martha Harrington (the parents of our late beloved brother and fellow-laborer, Rev. Whitefield Harrington), Epps, Tucker, McKay, Adams, Wright, Godbold, and a host of others equally worthy. In the Louisiana part of our circuit we had as prominent members in St. Helena Parish the names of Rollins, Kendrick, Mathews, Venables, and many others; and in Washington Parish we had the Shillings, Meeks, Lewis, and others.

We have mentioned one name—that of William Venables—that deserves a prominent place in our history. Mr. Venables was born in England, near Liverpool, April 25, 1787, of worthy and respectable parents. He was converted in his fourteenth year among the Wesleyan Methodists and became a member of their Society. When about grown, he became acquainted with Lorenzo Dow on one of his preaching tours in the British Isles, and was so pleased with him that about 1807 he returned with him to

New York, where he remained about two years. When Dow went to England, he committed the publication and sale of his books to a brother-in-law by the name of Miller, who had run largely in debt for materials to build a water grist and saw mill on Clarke's (now called Baker's) Creek, in Claiborne County, Mississippi Territory; and when he returned, he found his books under execution. He borrowed six hundred dollars from his young friend Venables to release his books, and took the mill off the hands of his brother-in-law to save the borrowed money. It resulted in Mr. Venables coming with Dow to this country and taking part in the mill in order to save himself. After adjusting his claim on Mr. Dow, he returned with him through the Indian wilderness and all the way to New York on horseback. In a short time he left New York with Lorenzo and Peggy Dow in order to make their future homes in Mississippi. They traveled across the country to Wheeling, on the Ohio River, where Mr. Venables and Mrs. Dow took passage with several others on a family boat, while Mr. Dow made a preaching tour by land. In about six weeks they all arrived at the mill seat. These are the circumstances that gave to our Church in this country one of the most valuable laymen we ever had.

On arriving in Mississippi he entered zealously into all the movements of the little band of Methodists on Baker's Creek, and was active in the class and prayer meetings and a host in revival seasons. While here he married Miss Ann Matthews, the sister of Rev. John Matthews. Mr. Venables remained at the mill, which at that time was called Dow's Mill.

until 1814, when it passed into the hands of John Baker, a sterling Dutchman and a thorough Methodist, who remained in possession of it until both the mill and creek took his name. The mill disappeared near fifty years ago, but the creek still retains his name. Mr. Venables, with several others, moved from Claiborne County, Miss., to St. Helena Parish, La., and settled on Tickpah River, where he built a water mill to which he devoted a large part of his after life. He was rather taciturn and spent little of his time in what we call social visiting or conversation. Most of his waking hours through life were spent in reading substantial religious books or periodicals or at hard work either for his family or the Church. In his early manhood he filled the offices of class leader and steward with marked promptness and acceptability.

When we knew him, in 1824-25, he was a licensed exhorter, and was no sinecure in the office. Like John the Baptist, he "preached many things in his exhortation to the people." He was soon thereafter licensed to preach, and became one of the most laborious and faithful local preachers in all that country. The fertility of the lands around him was such as to invite a large colored population, and the last fifteen years of his life were voluntarily devoted to the religious interests of the negroes. He was very popular and useful among them; so that at the close of the late war he had in his vicinity two hundred colored members under his pastoral oversight. But a negro seems to be constitutionally incapable of what we call gratitude. As soon as they found themselves at liberty to do so, they all, with but few

exceptions, turned their backs upon their faithful old pastor and went into some newly introduced colored organization. This was a grief to the old patriarch; but he had the satisfaction of feeling that the fault was not his, and that he was not accountable for any evil consequences that might follow.

Mr. Venables was in great demand to bury the dead, preach funerals, marry the young folks, baptize the babies, etc., and was almost universally confided in and respected as one of the best of men; and yet he was a plain, unostentatious, and meek-spirited Christian man. There was nothing ornate or elegant either in his language or manner of delivery. In what, then, consisted his superior ability for moving the hearts of the people? We answer: It was the power of the Holy Ghost that attended all his public religious exercises. We think it may as truthfully be said of him as it was of the sweet-spirited Barnabas that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

It was in the fall of 1824 that we first met him, at Kendrick's Church, where he held his membership. We called on him to lead in prayer. It seemed to move every heart. We rode home with Father Kendrick, and could not but recall the powerful prayer we had just heard. Said Father Kendrick: "He can come nearer praying the shingles off the roof of the house than any man I ever heard." His gift in prayer was extraordinary. He seemed to live and breathe in the spirit of prayer at all times and everywhere. And is not this one of our Christian privileges?

He had his share of losses and afflictions through

the journey of life; but his faith rose above them all, and he pressed onward to the city above until November 12, 1868, when he died in great peace at the home of his son-in-law, Mr. Caruth, in St. Helena Parish, La., in the eighty-second year of his age, having been a member of the Church without a break sixty-eight years. He left four children—three sons and a daughter—to represent him in the Church militant. May they follow their sainted father as he followed Christ! It makes one feel more like striving to get to heaven to think of a reunion there with such pure spirits as that of William VENABLES.

This was a prosperous year, giving us a net increase of eight hundred and eleven white and two hundred and four colored members.

CHAPTER III.

1826.

THE Mississippi Conference met in Washington, Miss., December 8, 1825, Bishops Roberts and Soule present. William Winans was again elected Secretary. The old Methodist church being too small for Conference congregations and the new church not yet ready for occupation, we accepted gratefully the offer of the commodious Baptist church for our public religious services. The Conference room was a small office on Main Street, about the center of the town. The members of the Conference were mainly quartered in town, but the probationers were sent into the surrounding country. Every preacher from a distance came on horseback, and our horses were distributed among the planters in the vicinity without charge. The first day or two the probationers and local preachers were not admitted into the Conference room as spectators. When not attending church, we stood around outside to see what little we could see and hear what little we could hear and guess at the balance. Why our elder brethren of those days treated the probationers for membership in the Conference in this way, we are at a loss to decide. It would seem reasonable to us, as those on trial expected soon to become members of Conference, that their presence as spectators ought to have been promptly invited, to afford them opportunities

for learning the routine of business before being required to take part in it, and to profit by the incidental remarks of the bishops and other ministers of experience. After the suspense of a day or so, the undergraduates were invited to back seats in the Conference room as spectators, which we very gladly accepted. This was our first sight of an Annual Conference in session. We remember the incidents of that Conference as though they had transpired but yesterday.

After appointing the usual committees, the Conference took up the regular minute business in a very irregular way, transposing the questions from time to time to suit the exigencies of the various cases. Richard H. Herbert, Joseph McDowell, Orsamus L. Nash, Jephthah Hughes, John Mann, Leroy Masengale, Benjamin A. Houghton, Eugene V. Levert, and John Patton were admitted on trial; the five admitted at the last Conference were continued, except Samuel Davis, who was discontinued on account of ill health. William V. Douglass, Isaac V. Enochs, and Henry J. Brown were received by transfer from the Tennessee Conference, and took their place in the class of the second year. Thomas E. Ledbetter, John Cotton, James Nicholson, Thomas S. Abernathy, Robert L. Walker, Thomas C. Brown, and John Collier were received into full connection and ordained deacons. John G. Lee, who was eligible the year before but for some reason was not ordained, was also ordained with this class. Francis R. Cheatham, John R. Lambuth, and Peyton S. Greaves were ordained elders. Thomas Griffin, Elisha Lott, Benjamin Dulaney, John Booth, and Alex-

ander Talley were readmitted. Ashley Hewitt and John E. Byrd were superannuated, Mr. Byrd on account of partial blindness; otherwise he was a very robust man. Francis R. Cheatham was placed in a supernumerary relation, and the beloved Henry P. Cook had fallen at his post, in Pensacola, with yellow fever October 14, 1825. Edmund Pearson, Marcus C. Henderson, William M. Curtis, Wiley Ledbetter, and Edward Harper located at their own request. From the local ranks Samuel Craig, Thomas Mellard, John B. Purdue, Stephen McReynolds, Thomas Whitson, and John W. S. Napier were elected deacons, and John McCormack and Samuel Oliver elders. In general the Conference proceeded very harmoniously. There were a few ripples on its smooth surface, and some rather exciting debates. Complaints were made against William M. Curtis and Miles Harper for maladministration. After obtaining what light was available, Mr. Curtis was exonerated; but Mr. Harper was censured, and the Conference voted an admonition from Bishop Roberts, which was tenderly given and meekly received. Zechariah Williams was not at Conference, but had been duly notified that complaints would be made against him for certain improprieties derogatory to his ministerial character. Mr. Williams wrote a letter to the Conference acknowledging that he had thoughtlessly been led into some indiscretions, which had given plausibility to the rumors against him. The matter was referred to a judicious committee of three, who reported that "he was guilty of impropriety and imprudence," and a motion was made to deprive him of his official standing, upon

which there was a tie; and the President gave the casting vote against him. It was both painful and discouraging to see a minister deposed who had traveled ten consecutive years and done as much faithful and acceptable work as Zechariah Williams had done. After laboring five years in the South Carolina Conference, where he entered the ministry, he came as a missionary to our Conference and labored five additional years on some of our largest circuits; but all this did not exempt him from the weaknesses and improprieties of our common humanity. It was still his duty as well as his means of safety to "give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." This ended Mr. Williams's career as an itinerant preacher, but such was his future course that he retained the confidence of those who knew him best. The Quarterly Conference of Onecuh Circuit soon relicensed him to preach, and at the next Annual Conference he was restored to deacon's orders, and at the next thereafter to elder's orders. The Alabama Conference being set off soon after this, the writer lost sight of him.

Some of the elder members of the Conference, including one or two young men, seemed determined to take charge of the matrimonial affairs of the undergraduates. Two years previously three promising young men had been dropped for getting married in their second year; and now Marcus C. Henderson, who was on the Alabama Circuit and was in his third year (having been received into full connection and ordained deacon at the previous Conference). had married a young lady who was

not a member of the Church and said to be rather gay and fashionable for a minister's wife. Something must be done to express the disapproval of the Conference to his marrying so early in his ministerial career, and especially his having married a nonprofessor. The following resolution is recorded in the Journal in the handwriting of the mover:

Marcus C. Henderson having married an irreligious woman, it was, on motion of William Winans, resolved that he be deprived of the office of deacon in our Church.

The next sentence in the Journal records the fact that "he asked for and obtained a location." Marcus C. Henderson was one of the finest-looking and most intellectual young men in the Conference, and gave early promise of taking a high stand in the ministry; but what was thought to be his premature and imprudent marriage was the occasion of suddenly beclouding his brightening prospects and terminating his itinerant life. He immediately passed out of our sight, and we never again had the pleasure of meeting him. We learned, however, that he maintained a good reputation as a local preacher, and died in a good old age somewhere in North Mississippi.

There was another case which stirred up the anti-marrying party to the most determined opposition to the early marriage of the young itinerants. Their prompt action, two years before, in dropping the three promising young men above referred to had seemed to put a stop to the marriage of probationers; now they must put a stop to the marriage of the deacons before they graduated to elder's orders.

They had deposed Marcus C. Henderson from deacon's orders mainly, they said, because he had "married an irreligious woman;" but how could they get hold of Elijah B. McKay, who had been on Whitesand Circuit in this third year and, near the close of the year, had married Miss Pope, an exemplary and pious member of the Church and belonging to an excellent Methodist family? He had violated no law of the Bible or the Discipline; but his case must be reached somehow, in order to arrest the growing tendency to marriage among the undergraduates of the Conference. A resolution was offered to the effect "that no man who married under four years from the time of his admission on trial should hereafter be ordained elder until four years after his ordination as deacon." Quite a spirited debate was springing up when Ashley Hewitt rose up and inquired: "Mr. President, is the Mississippi Conference a legislative body, with authority to enact a new law?" Bishop Roberts promptly replied: "It is not." "Then," continued Mr. Hewitt, "that resolution cannot be entertained, as it is intended to enact a new law." The Bishop so decided. This put the anti-marrying members at fault for a few moments, when Robert L. Walker introduced the following resolution, as no man could be ordained elder until first elected by a majority of the Conference.

Resolved, That we will not elect to elder's orders any member of our body who shall marry within four years of the time of his admission on trial until four years after he was ordained deacon.

This resolution, though intended to have the effect of a new law, was considered entertainable, and

quite an earnest debate ensued. William Winans was strongly in favor of it, and said that their right to vote at all implied the right to vote for or against any man as they saw proper; that these early marriages were fraught with evil to the itinerancy, and through it to the whole Church; that an early marriage not only circumscribed a young minister in his field of operation, taxed his time, and diverted his mind from his required course of study, but usually led to an early location, as no adequate provision had yet been made for the support of preachers' families; that it was disheartening to see how things were going on; that we took up illiterate young men out of the ashes and from the very back door of obscurity and introduced them into the ministry because they professed to be called of God to preach the gospel, but before they had given assurance of prospective success they had married and, having encumbered themselves with families, were compelled to an early location. Thomas Owens, who had then traveled as a single man about twelve years, was very hostile to early marriages. He seemed almost indignant at Elijah B. McKay for marrying so young and then presuming to bring his young wife up to Conference, as though he defied all opposition to his course. Mr. Owens continued: "Yes, Mr. President, as Brother Winans has truthfully said, we take up ignorant and unfledged young men out of the ashes and from unpromising positions because they tell us that God has converted them and called them to preach. We know they can't preach yet; but think maybe there is timber enough about them, if it can be worked up, to

make a passable preacher. So we take them and put them on a circuit. At first they make such a bungling out trying to preach that the old sisters, and especially the old class leaders and local preachers, who have heard so much good preaching, cannot hold up their heads and look them in the face; and just about the time they begin to show the first symptoms of preaching ability they get married. And then, as though they had done something smart, they come riding up to Conference beside their young wives with all the importance of a bishop." "Brother Owens," said Bishop Roberts quizzically, "please tell the Conference how important a bishop is." "Well, as to that, sir," Mr. Owens replied, "I do not know that I can decide; but they are very important in their place. To say the least of it, I think those who marry before they learn how to preach might have the prudence and modesty with their young wives that a cow has with her young calf: hide them out awhile before they bring them up to Conference." The feelings of the Conference had now relaxed into a very pleasant mood. Mr. Owens was a man of fine judgment and withal a good reasoner; but he had to speak in his own peculiar and fascinating style, or not succeed in making a speech. Thomas C. Brown was an educated and talented young man and a good debater; and although just received into full connection, he led in debate those who were opposed to the passage of the resolution. He took the scriptural ground that "where there is no law, there is no transgression," and defiantly affirmed that there was no law, either expressed or implied, in the Bible or in the Disci-

pline of the Church forbidding the marriage of deacons whenever they considered it proper to do so, provided they did it "reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God," and that they did not subject themselves to any just penalty or disparagement for doing what they had a right to do as Christian men and ministers. Mr. Brown became earnest in his opposition to the resolution, and there seemed to be some disposition on the opposite side to break the force of his argument, as he was rather abruptly interrupted in his speech; but Bishop Roberts saw him righted and forbade any further interference. The resolution, however, passed and stands on the record, and both parties were anxious to see it finally tested; but as Mr. McKay was not eligible to elder's orders at this Conference, they had no test case. But at the next Conference he was eligible; and on his case the strength of parties was fairly tested, and he was elected to elder's orders by a considerable majority. In one or two cases subsequently a few of the anti-marrying members voted against the election of young men who married under four years, but the opposition soon became extinct.

William Winans, the "agent of the New Orleans Meetinghouse business," so often referred to heretofore, made the most encouraging report that we had ever received, setting forth the fact that, in conjunction with Benjamin M. Drake, the missionary in the city, and Hon. Edward McGeehe, of Wilkinson County, Miss., who had been appointed by the bishops to coöperate with the agent, he had bought an open lot in what was then called the Up-

per Fauxburgh, fronting on Gravier Street sixty feet, and running back one hundred and twenty feet, French measure, which is about seven per cent longer than English measure, for which lot they were to give two thousand dollars, one half down and the other in twelve months from the date of the purchase. As Judge McGeehe had become responsible for the balance on the lot and all the expenditures in building, the title to the property was taken in his name, with a legal guarantee from him to transfer the whole to a legal board of trustees when he should be reimbursed. Having obtained the land, the agents at once proceeded to the erection of a building forty-eight feet long by thirty-six wide and eighteen feet from the floor to the plates, with galleries above on the sides and the end opposite the pulpit for the occupancy of the colored people. The building was a frame, weatherboarded outside and lathed and plastered within, with neat and comfortable pulpit and seats. For this building they were to pay one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars in three equal installments at certain stages of progress in the erection of the building. The agent further reported that the first payment on the lot had been made and two installments on the house, leaving an aggregate balance of fifteen hundred and eighty-three dollars and some cents to be provided for. To discharge this indebtedness, which had now to be done in a short time, the agents had, in money and subscriptions (including ten hundred and twenty-eight dollars subscribed by the preachers in Conference), fifteen hundred and sixty-two dollars and eight cents. This report of the committee, followed

by some remarks from B. M. Drake, the missionary, was received with joy and hope by the Conference. After a struggle of twenty long years since Elisha W. Bowman first went as a missionary to the city, we had at length got a title to an unpretending house of our own to worship in, with a membership of twenty-three whites and sixty colored. Most of the preachers in the Conference, poor as we were, contributed our mite in the erection of that first little Methodist church in New Orleans. We have been somewhat lengthy in our details that the present generation of New Orleans Methodists may be able to contrast their present prosperity with those small beginnings. From 1806 our missionaries had often suffered defeat, and for years at a time our forces had been withdrawn from the almost hopeless contest. But now, under God's blessing, New Orleans was to be perpetually on the list of pastoral charges and ultimately to become a place of Annual and General Conferences.

William Winans, whose district embraced the Choctaw Mission, "made a verbal statement of the circumstances of that mission, showing a total defeat in the enterprise." This defeat, however, was only temporary. It was left to be supplied the two succeeding years; but no supply was obtained until late in 1827, when the mission was revived under the superintendence of Rev. Alexander Talley, M.D., and ultimately proved a great success.

Mr. Winans saw that, under the law as it then was governing the ratio of delegation in the General Conference, the body was growing too large, unwieldy, and expensive; and he offered a resolu-

tion, which passed unanimously, requesting the General Conference to change the law so as to lessen the ratio of delegates, and then added another resolution, which also passed, requesting the bishops to submit the foregoing resolution to all the Annual Conferences for concurrence, that the law might be changed at the next General Conference; all of which was carried into effect.

At the closing session of the Conference the committee on memoirs presented a memoir of our loved and lamented Henry P. Cook. His first year was on the Pensacola and Mobile Mission in 1824. He was continued on the same work in 1825, Mobile being considered the most important point in his mission. In the early part of the year he prosecuted his work with untiring zeal. Sometime in the summer he had an attack of bilious fever which quite disabled him for a few weeks; and he hoped a little relaxation from labor on a visit to his parents, in Butler County, might be the means of restoring his health. The visit began to have the desired effect, but such was his anxiety to resume the labors of the mission that he returned too soon. He arrived at Pensacola on the first of October, and died from the prevailing yellow fever on the fourteenth. The following letter from Mrs. Mary Woodrow, one of the most exemplary Christians in his charge, to his mother is worthy of preservation. We copy it from the *Methodist Magazine* for 1826

PENSACOLA, October 20, 1825.

Respected Sister: You will, no doubt, be much surprised at receiving this address from a stranger, though the name of Woodrow may have been mentioned to you. I

regret that it becomes my duty to impart afflictive intelligence. Your maternal heart has already taken the alarm, and beats with anxiety toward the loved son, who sometimes resided among us. Alas! my sister, I scarcely know how to tell the woeful tale; but he is no more among us. He arrived here on the 1st instant, and found me deeply afflicted by the death of a dearly beloved and almost only son. He called as usual, frequently, to see me; and on the evening of the 7th he called for the last time. He was then much indisposed, and had been riding out to try to recover his feelings. From that time the fever made rapid advances. On the 14th he expired like a lamb, leaving behind him a sweet savor of his Christian virtues. My recent affliction, the low state of my health, and the illness of my family at that time—all combined to prevent my writing him in the early stages of his disease; but on the 13th a friend procured a carriage and conveyed me to his house. I found him in every respect as comfortably situated as you could wish; struggling, indeed, with his last enemy, but stronger in faith, hope, and love; perfectly sensible of his approaching end; perfectly resigned, and only lamenting that he could do no more in his blessed Master's service. He spoke feelingly of his family, particularly of his dear mother; said he had been making an effort to write to you, as he wished to write to you himself, but that he was too weak, and requested me to write for him; mentioned the anxiety you would feel at finding he was not at the camp meeting, where you expected to meet him; and prayed devoutly that you might be supported under the approaching affliction. Brother Hannah, at whose house he stayed, watched by him day and night, and will, no doubt, write you more particularly. Thus died the most exemplary youthful minister of the gospel; and truly can I say, one more abstracted from the world and devoted to God and his cause I have never known. Let this be your consolation, my sister. His Heavenly Father accepted his labors early, and called him to eternal bliss. He has made a great escape from a wicked, ensnaring, unfriendly world, to suffer no

more forever. His debt is paid, and he rests in Abraham's bosom. Turn your attention from your grievous loss to his immortal gain. Contemplate him in the enjoyment of the Redeemer's glory, and think how he would plead with you to bow with meek resignation to his Heavenly Father's will. The treasures, honors, and all earth has to give, could they all be insured to him, would not for one moment tempt him to return to earth. O let this be your consolation. A little while, and we shall all meet again, to part no more. My own heart, bleeding under a recent wound and often called upon to offer up my Isaacs, knows how to sympathize with your sorrows. From Heaven alone can we derive consolation under such bereavements; and, blessed be our God! in him we have a sure refuge and strong consolation. That the everlasting arms of his mercy and love may be extended toward you is the sincere prayer of your sister in our blessed Redeemer,

MARY WOODBOW.

We have copied the above letter not only on account of its elevated style, its orthodoxy, and its soothing sympathy with a bereaved Christian mother, but also because we are unwilling that the meager memoir in the General Minutes should stand as the only monument of such a man as Henry P. Cook. He was one of the most holy, most lovely, most laborious and promising young ministers of his day. A sister in the Church, who was anxious to know how a Christian minister would die, visited him when he was supposed to be speechless, and asked him, if his assurance was still strong, to give them a sign. He answered with a nod, and in a few moments, by much exertion, exclaimed, "Very, very, very!" soon after which he ceased to breathe.

When his death was announced, the Conference

requested Bishop Soule to preach a memorial sermon, which he did in his most effective and overwhelming style. When we say that Bishop Soule preached one of his most approved sermons on this occasion, the few now living who heard him in the prime and strength of middle life will appreciate our meaning; those who never heard him cannot well conceive of the apostolic dignity, grandeur, eloquence, and power with which he often preached. His peroration which concluded this deserved eulogy of Henry P. Cook cannot be transferred to paper and could not be surpassed.

Bishop Roberts also preached one of his best sermons on Sabbath morning from Revelation i. 5, 6; "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." The whole sermon was a model in arrangement, in style and gesture, in easy and rapidly flowing eloquence and spiritual power; but his outcome on the concluding sentence, "To him be glory," was inimitable. "What?" inquired the Bishop; "must we say 'glory?' Yes; when we feel glory, we ought to say 'glory.' Saying 'To him be glory' will be a large and perpetual part of our heavenly employment 'forever and ever.' Let us then learn to give utterance to our highest religious joy by saying 'glory' when we feel glory." An incident occurred toward the close of the Bishop's sermon which may be recorded as an admonition against a very foolish and sometimes very annoying practice—that of timing a preacher by a watch. Little Tommy Owens doubtless thought

on that day that Bishop Roberts was the greatest preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Apparently unconscious of what he was doing, he drew out his watch; and turning the dial toward the pulpit, with eyes fixed intently on the Bishop, he held it for a moment, as though waiting for the speaker to leave space enough between two sentences for him to glance at the time, when the Bishop discovered the suspended watch and the earnest gaze of Mr. Owens and, supposing it an admonition from his admiring brother that his sermon was growing too long, made a remark to that effect and hastened to a close. Mr. Owens at once saw his thoughtless error, and was deeply mortified. So far from intending to stop the Bishop, he could have sat entranced until the going down of the sun, listening to his *beau ideal* of the greatest preacher on the continent. The Conference elected Tuscaloosa, Ala., as the place of its next annual session, and the bishops gave December 14, 1826, as the time. Rev. John C. Burruss was appointed to return the thanks of the Conference to the citizens of Washington and vicinity for their generous hospitality in entertainment, and to the Baptist Church for the use of their elegant house of worship.

It was evening twilight when the Conference closed its business. Bishop Soule delivered the final address to the preachers and offered the concluding prayer; then he proceeded to "read the appointments." In those days the candidates for admission on trial were not required to be present at Conference to undergo any preliminary examination, so that this writer had never witnessed the announce-

ment of the appointments. He was intensely excited. He thought Bishop Soule was very lengthy, both in his address and prayer. He was anxious to hear his destiny for the next twelve months. He knew it would be somewhere between Georgia and Texas and the Indian Nations and the Gulf of Mexico, but *where* in this vast domain was yet the unanswered question. The young men of the Conference, as soon as they acquired a short experience in the itinerancy, were all expected to serve a year or two west of the Mississippi River; but such were the extraordinary natural and moral difficulties of the country that it was thought wholly unsuitable for inexperienced young men, and there was a tacit understanding in the bishops' council that no young man should be continued there after his first year without his consent. We called Western Louisiana the college of our Conference, where our undergraduates were sent to learn by experience how to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." The writer had flattered himself that he would not be sent to college so early, as he was just entering upon his preparatory studies as an itinerant. Indeed, Mr. Winans, his late presiding elder, had assured him that he would oppose his being sent west of the Mississippi, as he considered him too young and inexperienced for an outpost so remote and involving so many peculiar difficulties. But very unexpected changes are sometimes necessarily made in the bishop's council just before the appointments are announced. So it was on this occasion. Thomas S. Abernathy had been selected for Washita Circuit, and the writer put down as junior preacher on one

of the circuits east of the Alabama River. Dr. Kennon, the late presiding elder of Mr. Abernathy, knowing his private circumstances, doubted whether he could leave Alabama at this time for an appointment in Western Louisiana, and consulted him on the subject. Mr. Abernathy told him promptly that he could not go, and that he would be compelled to avoid it by a voluntary location if a change could not be made. The result was that he was put in charge of Chickasawhay Circuit and the writer changed to Washita.

The concluding hymn having been sung and the final prayer offered, Bishop Soule stood up and, while a deathlike silence pervaded the little Conference room, commenced reading out the appointments in very distinct and slowly measured tones, thus:

Louisiana District.—Alexander Talley, P. E.

Attakapas, Robert L. Walker.

Rapides, Jonas Westerland.

Washita, John G. Jones.

Bishop Soule proceeded to the end of the list; but so far as the writer was concerned, the curtain now fell. His mind became abstracted from all else except Washita Circuit. How was he to get there? What sort of a country and people would he find? Would he, with his little fund of theological knowledge and short experience, be able to render acceptable and useful service for twelve months in a work of so much difficulty? These and other similar questions filled his mind. The Conference adjourned; and early next morning the preachers mounted their horses and scattered to the four winds, spreading

themselves thinly over the whole country from the Chattahoochee to the Sabine. The two bishops also, in itinerant preacher's style, set off on horseback through the entire breadth of Mississippi and Alabama to Milledgeville, Ga., the seat of the South Carolina Conference.

The late Conference was held in Washington, Miss., which was the original hive of Methodism in all the Southwest, and now merits another passing notice. It had been the capital of the territorial government and the seat of justice of Adams County. It was in the midst of large bodies of superior uplands, which had drawn around it one of the most wealthy, intelligent, refined, and piously inclined communities anywhere to be found in the State. The growth of Methodism from 1799 had been steady and permanent; and at this time the Church had a large membership, embracing many of the most wealthy and influential families both in town and country. Some of these families were the descendants of the old Protestant families that lived here under the Spanish government, and others had moved into the country more recently. Among them we recollect with great pleasure Hon. Alexander Covington, Beverly R. Grayson, William L. Chew, John W. Bryan, William Bantz, Archibald Lewis, and their elegant and devotedly pious families; also, at a period a little later, John Nugent, William Diamond, Thomas Farrar, Mr. Haslip, Peter Rabb, and others. Among the elect ladies of the Church, in addition to the wives and daughters of those already named, we record the names of Mrs. Lavinia Ford, who was the sister of Hon. Seth Lewis, of Ope-

lousas, heretofore mentioned; Mrs. Catherine Foreman, afterwards Mrs. Farrar; Mrs. Calvit and her daughter, Mrs. Wilkinson, afterwards Mrs. Henry; Mrs. Brabston; two Mrs. Winstons; and many others too numerous to mention. Archibald Lewis was the nephew of Hon. Seth Lewis, of Opelousas, and descended from one of the oldest Protestant families in Mississippi. His grandson, Tom L. Mel-
len, attorney at law in Natchez, has his great-grandfather's Bible, in which we find the following interesting record: "Natchez, Wednesday, 26th of August, 1776, Rev. Samuel Swayze baptized Mary Lewis, wife of Daniel Lewis, and Archibald and Moses, their two children." Mr. Daniel Lewis came from Massachusetts about 1774; and after remaining a year or two somewhere low down on Big Black River, removed to St. Catharine, near Natchez, where the baptism of his family took place. It should be borne in mind that the "Natchez country" was at this time under the British government, and Protestantism was allowed in the land. Rev. Samuel Swayze was a Congregationalist minister, and was doubtless the first Protestant minister that ever settled in the "Natchez country" or even visited it. We have given some account of him in the early part of our history. He was the maternal great-great-grandfather of the writer. Two or three years after the baptism of Mrs. Lewis and her two children, the Spanish government took advantage of the war between England and her American colonies, and extended her government over the "Natchez country;" and Protestant worship was forbidden under the severest pains and penalties, and Protestant

books, and especially Bibles, were committed to the flames whenever the priesthood could lay hands on them. Mr. Lewis had to keep his Bible closely concealed for the next twenty years, but the dear old relic gives evidence, in its dilapidated condition, of having been well and often read. The maiden name of Mrs. Archibald Lewis was Eleanor Sappington, and she was brought up (perhaps born) near Nashville, Tenn. She was a sister of the celebrated Dr. Sappington, the patentee of the famous "Sappington Pills," of world-wide notoriety. Mrs. Lewis survived her husband many years, and was noted to the close of her protracted life for her unwavering, deep, and modest piety. She has left most of her descendants to the present day as the inheritance of the Church of her earliest and latest love.

John Nugent married the daughter of Judge Seth Lewis, of Opelousas. Mr. Nugent was a cultivated Irishman of the best type, and his first wife was a daughter of Mrs. Catharine Foreman. She was a lady of rare beauty and sterling piety; and her early death, from yellow fever in the fall of 1825, was greatly lamented by the Church and community. We understand that Mr. Nugent died from old age early in 1873, at the residence of his son, W. L. Nugent, in Jackson, Miss. He was a man of sterling intellectual and moral worth, and was a steady and liberal supporter of all the interests of the Church through a period of more than fifty years. Many of the persons mentioned above died in the vicinity of Washington, but many others moved away to the new countries and helped to build up Methodism in other localities. None of the first genera-

tion of Washington Methodists are yet alive, and but few of the second or even third; but they were a remarkably firm and faithful generation of Christians and, with scarcely an exception, were faithful until death.

It is thought by some, as the first Methodist society was formed in Washington, that the first Methodist church built in the Southwest was built there; but this is clearly a mistake. The first church was not erected there until 1812, whereas we have seen that the first Methodist church in Natchez was built about 1807-08; and doubtless some small log churches had been erected in a few places previous to 1812. Precisely where the Church worshiped in Washington from its organization in 1799 to 1812 is not known. Perhaps it was in the public school-house (where the Church was organized) for a term of years, and then in the courthouse or territorial legislative hall. Through the kindness of our much-esteemed friend and former neighbor, W. N. Whitehurst, Esq., of Washington, Miss., we now have before us a copy of the deed given for the lot of ground on which the first Methodist church was built in the territorial capital. The deed is dated November 20, 1811; the vendors of the lot were no less personages than the celebrated Lorenzo Dow and his wife Peggy. We regret our inability to draw a facsimile of their rather clumsy but very plainly written signatures to the deed. Lorenzo Dow was now a citizen of Jefferson County, living at his Chickamaw Spring place. We presume that at one of his earlier visits to the Territory he saw that Washington was a place of growing importance, and

acquired a title to this eligible lot near the center of the town; and as he almost literally gave everything he could call his own to the cause of God, he now turned over this lot for a church site. In order to make the transfer legal, the deed specifies that it was made "for and in consideration of the sum of twenty-five dollars in lawful currency of the United States of America to them in hand paid," etc. If the money was really put into his hands, it is likely that he handed it back to help build the church, for this would have been in keeping with his way of doing things. The original board of trustees consisted of Rev. Miles Harper, Maj. Isaac Quinn, Reuben Newman, Robert Turner, Daniel Rawlings, and Alexander Covington. The lot was seventy feet wide by one hundred feet deep. The deed was such as the Methodist Discipline then required, with the proviso that, when unoccupied by the Methodists, regularly licensed clergymen of other Churches might preach therein. It was perhaps this liberal and Christian proviso that suggested Concord as the name of the new Church, but it was seldom used. It is handed down by tradition that Rev. Miles Harper was the leading spirit in the board of trustees in the erection of the church. The walls were built of brick; the house was of good size and sufficiently high to admit of galleries inside for the occupancy of the colored people, except on extraordinary occasions, when they were needed for the vast congregations of white people that assembled there. Of most of the original board of trustees the writer had some personal knowledge, but of Maj. Isaac Quinn he has no recollection. He has, however, obtained a sketch

of his history. He was from Westchester County, N. Y., and his wife from Connecticut. It is said of her that she possessed an uncommonly strong intellect, and had great influence for good in female circles. As an officer, Maj. Quinn had borne a distinguished part in the Revolutionary War, and was present at the fall of General Montgomery at the battle of Quebec, and assisted in his burial. Many long years after, when it became desirable to remove the remains of General Montgomery to Trinity Church, New York, an escort was sent to convey Major Quinn to Quebec to identify the grave of his former illustrious chief. Major Quinn commanded the American forces that took control of the country north of West Florida in 1798, when the Spanish forces and government evacuated the Natchez District, until a territorial government was established. Reuben Newman was among the early converts to Methodism in the region of Selsertown, a few miles north of Washington. He was a very devout and faithful man. He had an impediment in his speech which seemed painful and embarrassing in common conversation; but notwithstanding this, he was long a class leader and—what was very remarkable—he seldom stammered in the exercises of a class meeting or in family prayer. He moved to the open woods in Warren County, where, in 1828, the writer was with him on his deathbed and attended his funeral. His death was a triumph.

The history of the first church in Washington is full of interest. It became the most popular preaching place in all the country. The congregations were large and appreciative, many of whom, from time

to time, were sweetly drawn into the gospel net. Methodism was popular; the preachers had the co-operation of a lively and zealous membership. The social meetings of the Church were highly appreciated and well attended. We would think ourselves highly favored to get as many people together at any Sabbath appointment in these river counties now as we have seen there at the ordinary weekly prayer meetings. The people had a mind to go to the house of the Lord, and they went. Washington was now in the zenith of its glory and prosperity; but from this date (1825-26) a variety of natural causes contributed to its depopulation until for a score of years it has been nothing more than a scattered village. The forty-five delegates (including David Holmes, the President) elected by the Territory of Mississippi to meet in Washington July 7, 1817, to draw up and adopt a constitution preparatory to the admission of Mississippi as a State into the Federal Union, having no suitable house to hold the convention in, accepted an invitation from the members and patrons of the Church to hold it in their house of worship, which for the time being became the capitol of the Territory without, however, interrupting the usual religious services held in it. This Constitutional Convention of forty-five delegates, which occupied the church with their presence and labors until the 15th of August, well represented the intelligence, wealth, patriotism, and piety of the Territory. Among the members were found several leading Methodists, such as Rev. John Ford, of Marion County; William Lattimore, of Amite; John McRae, of Green; etc. Of the forty-five delegates, not

one is living since the death of the late venerable Joseph E. Davis, an elder brother of Ex-President Jeff Davis. The first General Assembly elected under the new constitution held its session in Washington. The population in and around Washington continued to increase until it was thought best to build a larger and more tastefully finished house of worship, which still stands, a monument to the intelligence, refinement, and piety of those who built it.

After the completion of the new church its predecessor gradually grew into disuse until, on November 6, 1830, it was sold, according to the provisions of the Discipline, to the trustees of Jefferson College, and thereafter was devoted to literary purposes until, in January, 1873, it was demolished by a tornado.

The Washington Methodists of those days were generally very reliable. Few cases of apostasy or perversion ever occurred among them. Until the fall just previous to our late Conference it was thought to be proof against epidemic yellow fever and a safe retreat for the citizens of Natchez when it was visited by the fever; but this fall it prevailed in Washington and took off a number of the best citizens, so that people were restrained from fixing their family residences there. The seat of the State government was, soon after this date, removed to Jackson; and the seat of justice for Adams County had been removed to Natchez. The land office for the district west of Pearl River remained; and while it brought a great many people to Washington on business, it contributed very little to the permanent

population. The emigration of vast numbers from Washington and its immediate vicinity to the lands lately acquired by the general government in the interior of the State from the Choctaw Indians did more to depopulate the town than all other causes combined. The more wealthy planters who were disposed to remain began to buy up the small plantations adjoining them, so in a few years only two white families (that of the proprietor and his overseer) would occupy a territory whereon a dozen white families had lately resided. This same process came near breaking up a large number of our Churches and neighborhood schools all along the western margin of the State. Judge Covington and family removed to Warren County, where they remained steadfast members of the Church until their earthly pilgrimage closed. Judge Covington possessed a high order of mind, well cultivated by education and research; but in religion he had the simplicity of a child and the earnestness of a pure-minded Christian. He made one of our best class leaders of the olden time. Several of the Chew and Grayson families went to Yazoo County, where they aided much in establishing Methodism in what was then a new country. William Bantz, after giving two of his stepsons (Henry B. and Thomas Price) to the Mississippi Conference, removed with his family to Tensas Parish, La., where he and his saintly wife both died in faith within the past few years. A goodly number, however, of those who constituted the membership of our Church during the chivalrous days of Methodism at Washington closed their successful pilgrimage in and near the town, where, amidst pres-

ent desolation, their bodies await the resurrection of the just.

Washington, however, continued to be a place of considerable importance for a quarter of a century after the date of which we are now writing. The Elizabeth Female Academy continued to flourish for many years, which was also the case, at intervals, with Jefferson College, so that the congregations were large and the Church enjoyed a good degree of prosperity as late as 1850.

There was nothing out of the ordinary course in the appointments made at our late Conference. Alexander Talley succeeded Ashley Hewitt on the Louisiana District; and Thomas Griffin took the place of William Winans, whose time expired by limitation, on the Mississippi District. Benjamin M. Drake was continued in the New Orleans Mission; and John R. Lambuth succeeded our deceased brother, Henry P. Cook, in the Mobile Mission. Several new pastoral charges were formed, mainly in territory which had been embraced partially in circuits heretofore occupied. Warren Circuit lay mostly in Warren County, and was the western half of what the previous year had been called Big Black, with Thomas C. Brown as pastor. Port Gibson was detached from Bayou Pierre Circuit, and John C. Burruss appointed to spend as much of his time in preaching there as he could spare from the presidency of the Elizabeth Female Academy. The station was more than thirty miles distant from the place of his literary engagements, with only Saturdays and Sundays at his command. A new circuit, called Marengo, was formed in the Alabama Dis-

trict, embracing Marengo and parts of Dallas and Wilcox Counties, and extending from the Tombigbee to the Alabama River. A large part of this circuit was in neighborhoods recently settled, where there had been no regular preaching heretofore. The lands being very fertile, it soon became densely populated. John Collier was the first preacher appointed to this new work. Another new circuit was formed in the Cahawba District, called Sinclair in the General Minutes, but it should have been printed St. Clair. It lay north of Cahawba Valley Circuit, embracing St. Clair and portions of Shelby and Blount Counties. After the lapse of two years, the name was changed—or, what is more probable, it was merged into other circuits. James Nicholson was the preacher this year. Several young preachers appear on the roll this year for the first time who in after life became deservedly conspicuous on account of their fidelity, talents, and usefulness. Among them were William V. Douglass, Joseph McDowel, Richard H. Herbert, Leroy Massengale, Benjamin A. Houghton, and Orsamus L. Nash. As soon as the Conference adjourned on that ever-memorable night we approached Ashley Hewitt and proposed to be his traveling companion to the Washita country. We agreed to meet next morning in Natchez, where he had a little shopping to do for his family, and then we would set out immediately for Washita. We had a very imperfect idea of the resources of the people in the country to which we were going, and consulted Mr. Hewitt as to the necessity of purchasing in Natchez sundry supplies in the way of wearing apparel that might be needed before our return to Mis-

Mississippi at the end of the year, and were surprised to learn that there was a considerable town about the center of our circuit called Monroe, in which there were several variety stores where anything we might need could be obtained. We went up east of the Mississippi River to Vicksburg, arriving on the third day, which was the Sabbath—time enough for Rev. John Lane to circulate an appointment for Mr. Hewitt to preach in his house at night, there being then no public house of worship in the town. Mr. Lane had lately built what was then considered a large family residence, and which stood on a lot where the upper story of Mr. William Crutcher's residence now stands. The Lane house was burned by the explosion of a shell in it during the siege of Vicksburg, and considerable grading was done before its successor was erected on the same lot. The Lane house was one of the historic houses of Vicksburg. In the village age of the city, long before any churches were built, it was often used as a preaching place and also for holding the social meetings of the Church. In addition to its being consecrated to holy purposes by Mr. Lane and his pious family, it was often visited and reconsecrated by the presence and prayers of bishops, presiding elders, and all sorts and sizes of ministers, both itinerant and local, including an indefinite number of laymen. One or two Annual Conferences were held in it; and when the Church was able to furnish a Conference room elsewhere, on these occasions the Lane house was filled with Methodist preachers.

Early on Monday morning we resumed our jour-

ney to Washita. The first thing was to cross the great Mississippi River. We embarked in a small rowboat at the Vicksburg landing; and after coasting up about three miles in the slack water near the shore to allow for drifting down in crossing, we were landed on the point opposite the place of our embarkation. Our road from there to Lake Providence was a dim horse path, except about the few small plantations that were being opened and cultivated on the margin of the river. The banks of the river were covered with dense canebrakes and primeval forests, and often for fifteen or twenty miles there was an unbroken wilderness. Everything presented a solitary appearance. Even the few old-fashioned steamboats that we saw slowly plowing the waters of this inland sea looked lonely. Soon after leaving the point opposite Vicksburg we came to where a recent landslide had taken our path into the river, so that we had to dismount and, with our pocketknives, cut and break a new way through the big cane until we headed the caving bank. Such difficulties were often encountered on the banks of the Mississippi. The water marks on the trees, made by the annual inundation of the great swamp, were to be seen more than forty miles west of the river, and were often far above our heads on horseback. Late in the evening of the second day out from Vicksburg we arrived at Mr. Harbord Hood's, on Lake Providence, where we were most cordially received and hospitably entertained. Mr. Hood and his wife were Kentuckians. They had settled on government land on Lake Providence soon after their marriage, and at this time

had been living there about twenty-five years. In all that time not a sermon had been preached within forty miles of the settlement. They were so isolated from all the world that no itinerant had ever embraced them in his circuit. Mr. Hood had opened a little cotton farm on which he now worked six or eight hands. Several of his children were about grown, and he began to feel greatly in need of the public means of grace, not only for himself and family but also for the few neighbors around him, several of whom had belonged to Methodist families elsewhere. On his way to Conference Mr. Hewitt spent a night at his house. Mr. and Mrs. Hood importuned him to settle among them and become their pastor. Mr. Hood proposed to settle him on a part of his headright (for the land had never yet come into market) and assist in putting up the necessary buildings and in opening land enough to work two or three hands on. Mr. Hewitt felt that this was a providential opening to spend the years of his superannuation in preaching to those who would otherwise be without the gospel, and consented to the proposition. He now concluded to spend a day with Mr. Hood in perfecting his arrangements to move there in a short time. This gave the writer a day for quietude, rest, reading, meditation, and prayer, which was diligently improved and greatly enjoyed. Mr. Hewitt informed us that the distance we would have to travel the next day through the swamp was forty-five miles, with but one cabin on the route, in which the ferryman lived on Bayou Macon, and that in order to accomplish the journey in a short December day we must start at daylight. Mr. and Mrs.

Hood gave us an early start; and after traveling a short distance through a dense canebrake, we entered the open swamp, crossed the Bayou Macon on a raft of logs pinned together, passed over a flat country called the Macon hills just because it was a little above high-water mark, forded Bœuf River, and then barely allowed ourselves time to eat our lunch and say our prayers at the root of a tree. Resuming our perpetual trot, about the close of day we came to a beautiful open place as clean as a cultivated field. Mr. Hewitt informed us that it was Egg's Prairie, the first prairie we had ever seen. Night soon shut in upon us, but presently we emerged suddenly from the dense forest into what seemed to be a most beautiful level plantation with indefinite limits. After the fatigue and monotony of a hard day's travel through an unbroken wilderness, the sight of the Prairie Mer Rouge threw us into an ecstasy; and what greatly added to our joy was the fact that we were now in our circuit, where we could feel at home.

We were delighted to learn that the Griffings (who had formed Tobias Gibson's first Church at St. Albans, on Big Black River, and who were our near kindred) were living in the circuit and were still conspicuous for their piety and zeal. A little after nightfall Mr. Hewitt directed us through a large outer gate to the residence of Col. Ely K. Ross, whose house was the headquarters of Methodism in the Mer Rouge, and who was one of the stewards of the circuit. A generous supper and a night's rest were very refreshing after our long ride. We entered immediately upon our work. In a day or two Mr. Hewitt kindly accompanied us through the Burnt

Cabin Settlement, on Bayou Bartholomew, a little west of where the town of Bastrop now stands, and then on down the Bayou to the Island, where we preached our first sermon on the circuit at the house of Judge McLaughlin. We then returned to the Mer Rouge, and soon set out alone to visit and preach to our relatives, the Griffings, in Prairie Jefferson. On our way we saw, on the bank of the Bayou Gallion, laid out at full length, a huge reptile, shaped like a lizard, about twelve or fourteen feet long. We *guessed* it was an alligator, the first we had ever seen. During the next spring and summer we became very familiar with their presence, in wading and swimming on horseback through the extensive overflows. To be all alone, wading halfside-deep through an overflow two or three miles wide, and to have these amphibious monsters lay with the stillness of a log just under the surface, with nothing visible but the crest of their heads, with their eyes fixed upon you, is anything but pleasant to the inexperienced. When we reached the Bayou Bonida, our attention was arrested by a roaring overhead. We looked up and saw vast flocks of wild pigeons coming from every quarter and forming what is called a pigeon roost. The advanced flocks would select and settle on the boughs of the trees, and successive flocks would settle on and cleave to their predecessors until they would hang in clusters like a swarm of bees. Frequently the accumulating weight would break a bough and bring it down with a crash, and the birds would fly off, only to return immediately and make another settlement. The smaller and more elastic trees were often so overloaded that they bent until

the top limbs rested on the ground. After selecting their place for roosting, they would return each succeeding evening until they migrated to some new territory. What excited our curiosity was that they should come from afar and concentrate on one acre of trees almost to suffocation when they had illimitable forests to roost in at their convenience wherever night might overtake them.

After forming a very pleasant acquaintance with our kindred in Prairie Jefferson and preaching once, we proceeded regularly around our circuit. Our predecessor, Thomas C. Brown, who had been very popular on the circuit, had kindly (in addition to a minute plan of the circuit) furnished us with letters of introduction to numerous gentlemen about Monroe and elsewhere, so that we found our way around the circuit readily and began to feel quite at home everywhere. The territory occupied by us extended about eighty or ninety miles from Prairie Jefferson in the east to Wafer's settlement in the west, and was about fifty miles wide up and down the Washita River, which was about the center of the work. It was then truly an outpost. South, north, and east, there was no circuit within a hundred miles; and to the west there was none between us and sunset. There were no preachers of any name or denomination in our bounds except two very illiterate Baptist preachers. After Ashley Hewitt moved to Lake Providence, we think it no presumption to say that we were the greatest preacher in all that country in the absence of our presiding elder, for we were the only one there. We felt our isolation, but betook ourselves earnestly to the work before us. We

think it unnecessary to detail the many natural difficulties we met with in the way of mosquitoes and gnats, mud and water, bridgeless and ferryless bayous, etc. When the insects were out in full force, we could bar them off by wearing a veil of mosquito netting attached to the rims of our hats. As to the mud, it was often pleasantly said that the bottom was good wherever you could get to it; and as to the water, especially during the annual inundation, we took it as a matter of course and expected frequent wettings. We did not like to be plunged into deep water unexpectedly, as we sometimes were; but being a practiced swimmer, we took to the water, when necessary, as kindly as a water dog. Among the people we met with little else but the most generous cordiality and hospitality. We were struck with this feature of Washita society on our first entrance into the country. Everybody, professor and non-professor, French or American, Creole or emigrant, Catholic or Protestant, seemed to have a welcome for the preacher. Some of the Catholics who would not even be present with us in family worship would nevertheless treat us with every mark of hospitality about their houses. The truth is, they were anxious to keep up a succession of preaching in the country; and as most places were beyond the limits of all other preachers except the young Methodist itinerants, they treated us with great respect in their families and sometimes, at a heavy sacrifice of time, took immense pains to pilot us through uninhabited districts or to assist us in crossing high waters. Some of the French Catholics attended our places of worship and a few joined our Church; but as a

general rule they seemed inaccessible to Protestantism.

We could write a volume of incidents connected with our labors in the Washita country, but the general history of the Church is all that we have space to record. Several of the young men brought into the Church that year became preachers, and several of the young ladies in after years became the wives of itinerant preachers. Our net increase that year on Washita Circuit was one hundred and ninety-two white and twenty-three colored members, which was cause of great encouragement, considering the sparseness of the Protestant population. We had additions to most of the old societies and formed several new classes in neighborhoods where Church organization had not heretofore existed. In the settlement known as the "Old Village" and surrounding country we had very encouraging success, which resulted in the formation of a new society in the Old Village and a camp meeting in the vicinity of the fall. This section of country lay from twelve to twenty miles west of Monroe. The first society ever formed in Monroe was organized this year. There had been preaching in the town for many years, but no one had ever united with the Church. Our circuit was somewhat in the form of the figure eight, Monroe being in the center; so we visited it four times every round, and generally preached at every visit. We were very cordially received and entertained by most of the leading families in the town, and endeavored to improve our opportunities for doing good among them. A work of grace seemed to commence in the following way: We presented a

copy of the little book, still extant in our Church, called "The Life and Death of Two Young Ladies Contrasted," to Miss Eliza McFarland, the cultivated and highly accomplished daughter of General McFarland, with a request that she give it a thoughtful reading. It proved the means of her awakening. She loaned it to her near neighbor, Mrs. Trent, the wife of the gentleman whose name is perpetuated in the town of Trenton, a few miles above Monroe on the opposite side of the river, and she too was thoroughly awakened by its perusal. It was then handed to Mrs. Ailes, the wife of one of the principal merchants, who read it with similar effect. The three ladies then began to hold religious conferences, and mutually agreed to make a public profession of religion by uniting with the Church. In the meantime a colored woman, the house servant of Mrs. Dr. McGuire, had become much exercised about her salvation, and had obtained permission from her owners to join the Church, and had also requested us, through her mistress, to open the door for her reception, which we did soon after; so that she was, in point of time, the first person that joined our Church in Monroe. At the next opportunity the three ladies above named presented themselves as candidates for Church membership, Miss Eliza McFarland taking the lead. We afterwards had several additions of excellent material; such especially were the three ladies above named, composing the first society there, in 1826. General McFarland was—if our memory is correct—a reduced merchant from Cincinnati, where he had buried the pious mother of his amiable daughter, who now superintended his household af-

fairs. Soon after this he moved to San Augustine, Tex.; and Mr. Thrall, in his "History of Methodism in Texas," notes the fact that Miss Eliza McFarland was the first to step forward in the formation of a Church by Rev. Henry Stephenson in the vicinity of where her father then lived. She afterwards married Dr. Lawhon, a local preacher, and she remained steadfast in the faith. Mrs. Trent and Mrs. Ailes were both faithful unto death. O how we would like to record the many plain and powerful conversions that took place on our circuit that year as illustrations of the wonder-working grace of God! But our plan will not permit. It gives us unspeakable consolation to know that most of them have already gone to glory, and that the few that yet remain are still persevering in the narrow path.

There was a very important fact, when taken in connection with its rapidly accumulating results, that was evolved in the history of Methodism in Northwestern Louisiana this year. At this date the Missouri Conference embraced the State of Missouri and the Territory of Arkansas. Methodism had become somewhat prosperous in Southwestern Arkansas. A district, composed of three or four circuits, had been formed, called Arkansas, with Jesse Hale as presiding elder. Mr. Hale was a man of solid piety and useful talents, but was an ultra-abolitionist, and undertook to enforce literally in this slaveholding territory the provisions of Section IX. as it then stood in the Discipline, making slave owners ineligible to any official station in the Church, and requiring the traveling preachers who might incidentally come into possession of slaves to emancipate them

or forfeit their ministerial character. The result of this intermeddling with a civil institution was to create a great excitement in the Church and to separate those who had hitherto been united in Christian love and fellowship. The unhappy excitement became so intense and destructive to the peace and prosperity of the Church that it was called then and long after "the Hale storm." The result was that a large number of Methodist families living in the region of Hempstead and Clarke Counties (including the venerable William Stephenson, a traveling preacher, and three local preachers by the names of Henry Stephenson, Lord, and McMahan), having learned that the Mississippi Conference did not interfere with the civil relations of slavery, though they were not slaveholders themselves, determined to move across the line into what was then the northern part of Natchitoches Parish. These pious people brought their religion with them, and immediately commenced working Methodism foursquare without rounding off any of the corners. Our live presiding elder, Dr. Talley, heard of them, and embraced the first opportunity to make them a visit. He was delighted with his visit. He saw that the land was inviting and these settlers were solid and reliable materials and, with proper attention, the day was not distant when this country, known as Allen's Settlement, would become one of the strongholds of Methodism in Northwestern Louisiana. Let those who now live in Claiborne and Bossier Parishes decide as to the correctness of his forecast. This godly community was now beyond the sweep of the "Hale storm;" and though many of them were barely

housekeeping, they importuned Dr. Talley to give them an appointment for a camp meeting. He did so, and notified us to be present. We raised a company of eight or ten men, mostly from the Prairies Mer Rouge and Jefferson, and set out a distance of more than a hundred miles to this camp meeting. We went prepared to camp out at night, as the weather was warm and there were too many of us to crowd into the little cabins of the new settlers on the way. One or two of the young men took their guns to kill game, which gave us one fine wild turkey to roast on a spit the night before we reached the camp ground. It was the most primitive camp meeting we ever attended. We tethered our horses out to graze in the daytime, and tied them up to the trees at night. The tents, pulpit, and seats were of the cheapest structures. Our provisions consisted mainly of bread made of unripe corn, fresh pork, immature sweet potatoes, with coffee for the preachers and old folks. In addition to the four preachers already in the vicinity of Allen's Settlement (Dr. Talley and the writer), we had two brothers by the name of Orr from Arkansas, one a traveling and the other a local preacher. There was little to divert the mind from the one object of the meeting. The congregation, of course, was small, the settlement being quite sparse. Each preacher, both local and traveling, had to preach at least once. The Lord was with his people. It was easy to preach where such a fullness of the Spirit was feelingly present in the congregation. Two of our company from Prairie Jefferson, who came as seekers of religion, were powerfully converted. This was the first camp meeting ever held

in Louisiana north of Red River, and the one held soon after near the Old Village, in Washita Circuit, was the second. We also attended another one of those delightful and successful little camp meetings the same fall, held south of Natchitoches on the waters of Coushatta.

The venerable William Stephenson still held his membership in the Missouri Conference, and this year had a nominal appointment to Natchitoches Parish; but moving and settling his family allowed him little time to devote to the ministry away from his immediate vicinity. As Dr. Talley now claimed these new settlements as being in his territory, he instructed the writer to make one round and form a new circuit to be reported to our ensuing Conference. The appointments were sent out from the camp meeting; and after making one more round on our own circuit, we returned to these new settlements for the purpose of organizing the emigrants into societies and drawing up a plan for a new pastoral charge. We established eight preaching places, mostly in private houses, and collected a membership of about thirty, made out a regular plan of the circuit for the next year, and called the new circuit Natchitoches, as it was included in the northeastern part of that parish. The same territory was a few years later included in a new parish called Claiborne and the name of the circuit changed accordingly. We rejoice to know that Methodism is still predominant in that section of Louisiana.

After making one more round on our circuit, we started eastward to attend Conference in Tuscaloosa, Ala., having to travel about five hundred

miles on horseback to get there. We had done a year of hard work west of the Mississippi; but we came off with a glad heart, feeling that God had given us success far beyond our expectations. We returned by the way of Lake Providence, and paused there to assist Ashley Hewitt in a two days' meeting under Martin and Keane's new ginhouse, on the bank of the river. Mr. Hewitt, though a superannuate, had organized a small society and established several preaching places. He was the pioneer preacher in what is now Carroll Parish.

The statistics show that we had a net increase this year of only eighty white and four hundred and ninety-four colored members; but when it is borne in mind that in giving up Lawrence and Franklin Circuits to the Tennessee Conference we gave up eight hundred and four white and sixty colored members, it will be seen that if we had retained them our net increase would have been at least eight hundred and four white and five hundred and fifty-four colored members, showing that we had been favored with very encouraging prosperity.

CHAPTER IV.

1827.

ACCORDING to appointment, the Mississippi Annual Conference met at Tuscaloosa, Ala., December 14, 1826. Bishops Roberts and Soule were present. William Winans was again chosen Secretary. The opening religious services were conducted by Bishop Soule. Notwithstanding the extent of our territory, most of the members of the Conference were present. Though the youthful element still prevailed in our Conference, we now had as our file leaders a fair proportion of middle-aged men, but none in the decline of old age. Men enfeebled either by age or disease could not be effective in the work we then had to do. Though we lacked the maturity of old age and long experience in our deliberations, the interests of the Conference were very safe in the hands of such men as William Winans, Thomas Griffin, Alexander Talley, Robert L. Kennon, Ebenezer Hearn, Benjamin Dulaney, and a few others about the meridian of life.

After appointing the usual committees, the Conference proceeded with the regular business. William Leggett, Cornelius Warner, Moses Perry, William H. Turnley, James A. Hughes, Lewis S. Turner, and Anderson C. McDaniel were admitted on trial; and William M. Curtis, after being local one year, was

readmitted. Of the nine admitted the year before, all were continued on trial except John Patton, who retired at his own request. John G. Jones, John O. T. Hawkins, John P. Haney, William V. Douglass, William Spruill, Thomas Burpo, Isaac V. Enochs, and Henry I. Brown stood a creditable examination on the course of study, and were received into full connection and elected and ordained deacons; also Thomas Burpo, who was a year behind his time in consequence of being absent from the preceding Conference. Jonas Westerlund and Elijah B. McKay were elected and ordained elders. Ashley Hewitt, Barnabas Pipkin, Thomas Owens, and Thomas S. Abernathy were placed in a supernumerary relation; and Thomas C. Brown, John Collier, James Nicholson, John Booth, Jonas Westerlund, and Joshua Boucher, Jr., asked and obtained locations. Mr. Boucher was dissatisfied with the legal institution of slavery in our Conference territory, and asked to be transferred to the Ohio Conference. The bishops decided that it was contrary to the policy and interests of the Church to transfer a preacher from a deficient to a full Conference; and as his services were greatly needed here and were not so essential in the Ohio Conference, they declined to countenance what they considered a wrong precedent, and would not transfer him. He was, however, determined to go, and located in order to carry out his purpose. He entered the Ohio Conference, and continued to travel for many years. Of local preachers, George A. Campbell and James Moore were elected to deacon's orders, and Joshua Peavy to those of elder.

By journal resolution the local preachers who

were present at the Conference, in addition to the probationers, were invited to seats in the Conference as spectators. It was thought that the preachers would deal more faithfully with each other in the annual examination of character to have none present except those of their own profession. It is certain that the preachers dealt very faithfully with each other in those days, the object of which was to keep the ministry pure and to improve it in everything essential to its increased usefulness. There were some minor complaints against two or three of the undergraduates, but nothing of a serious character was alleged against any one connected with the Conference.

The Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss., under the presidency of Rev. John C. Buruss and the tutorship of Mrs. Caroline Matilda Thayer, was reported in a high state of prosperity.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Thayer and other ladies of Washington, Miss., a Female Assistance Society had been formed in that vicinity, the object of which was to raise funds outside of the ordinary collections of the Church to supplement the deficient salaries of the preachers, especially of those who labored on the poorer circuits. At this Conference they sent the sum of three hundred and twenty-seven dollars, which was most thankfully received, and Bishop Soule was requested to respond to their benevolence in behalf of the Conference, which he did in beautiful and complimentary style. The Conference voted a request to have the address published in the *Christian Advocate* at New York, which was just then coming into existence as our connectional weekly Church journal. This Female As-

sistance Society prospered only a few years, when, by the removal of its leading members to other communities, it was dissolved; but it did good in its day, and its members, when scattered abroad, continued their benevolence to the preachers through other channels.

As the joint committee of the Tennessee and Mississippi Conferences had not yet been able to establish the contemplated union college, the Mississippi Conference accepted an invitation to patronize, for the time being, Augusta College, in Kentucky, by recommending our people to educate their sons there.

At this date the subject of Freemasonry was made the occasion of a frenzied excitement in the United States, both in political and ecclesiastical circles, and was the means of producing much unpleasant and unprofitable wrangling both in Church and civil communities. Our presiding elders and other experienced ministers opposed any discussion on the subject in any of our Churches. They took the ground that all we had any right to demand of our members or ministers was to live consistently with their Church and ministerial vows; and that while doing this, if it was their will and pleasure to become members of any society (either secret or otherwise) organized for the promotion of morality, intelligence, and benevolence, we had no right to molest them for it. This was, no doubt, the correct view upon the subject.

The American Colonization Society, for the first time, was brought prominently before our Conference at this session by Benjamin M. Drake. Its object was heartily approved, and resolutions were

passed recommending it to the support of the members and patrons of our Church, and also requesting our preachers, both traveling and local, to take up collections on or about the 4th of July to further its object and remit the same to the Treasurer of the Society. The American Colonization Society was organized in 1816 for the purpose of colonizing on the western coast of Africa as many of the free people of color in the United States, including emancipated slaves, as would voluntarily be transported and settled there at the expense of the Society. The object of the Society was very popular in the Mississippi Conference—as it was generally in the Southern Conferences—and was liberally patronized until its popularity was weighed down and finally overcome by the fanaticism of the ultra-abolitionists of the Northern States.

Benjamin M. Drake, true to his advocacy of the parsonage system, again brought it prominently before the Conference; and a committee was appointed to draw up and publish an address to the Church within our bounds on the subject and disseminate it broadcast over our territory. It, however, had little effect. The time had not come to locate and furnish parsonages in our ever-changing circuits and districts; nor has it yet come, except in the town and city stations and a few of our more changeless country charges; nor will it ever come in much of our territory until we desist from the perpetual change of the boundaries of our circuits and districts.

The subject of uniformity in dress among the preachers was brought up, by motion, and produced

a very animated discussion. Most of the Southern preachers had already abandoned the short trousers, knee buckles, and long stockings, which were still worn by both of our bishops now present with us. But some of our elder brethren, especially William Winans and Thomas Griffin, insisted that we should retain as the distinguishing costume of a Methodist preacher the long waistcoat, with its rounded corners and huge pockets, and the glorious old round-breasted coat with its swallow-forked tail. It was true that the law of the Church did not require anything on the subject of dress except plainness and economy; but many looked upon it as an evidence of falling from grace for a Methodist preacher to abandon those antiquated and inconvenient fashions and dress like other gentlemen. What was now called the "old-fashioned Methodist costume" was simply the English colonial dress worn by General Washington and his contemporaries. The citizens generally, especially in the higher circles of society, had abandoned those unsightly fashions for patterns more becoming and comfortable; but our Methodist forefathers contended persistently against their flocks, and especially their ministers, changing the cut of their apparel in conformity to the ever-changing fashions of the world. Some of the laity and most of the preachers had worn the round-breasted coat with its characteristic collar until the date of which we are now writing; but there was an evident tendency, especially among the young men of the Conference, to lay aside an inconvenient and costly fashion and adopt the gentleman's long frock coat. We found by actual experiment that we could

purchase the common gentleman's costume ten or fifteen dollars cheaper than we could buy the same materials and have them made up; and with a salary of one hundred dollars a year, and often much less, this sum was well worth saving. Our elder brethren, however, had a resolution passed "earnestly recommending to all our traveling preachers plainness and, as far as practicable, uniformity of dress." But our young ministers soon quietly gave up the keel-bottomed coat with its standing collar for the neat-fitting frock coat. John R. Lambuth and Thomas Owens were the first to venture into our Annual Conference with the ordinary frock coat. Some of the old brethren looked at them reprovngly. How could they be so presumptuous? They were soon followed by most of the young men in the Conference, and ultimately by most of the older ministers too. Mr. Winans was always a pattern of plainness in his apparel, but he too gave up those old fashions. Thomas Griffin and a few others adhered to the "old-fashioned Methodist coat" to the end of life.

Our missionaries in New Orleans and Mobile reported some progress in the midst of formidable difficulties. Mr. Drake, from New Orleans, reported the church on Gravier Street finished and a prospect of its being soon freed from debt, and also some increase in the membership and in the size of the congregation; but still, he said, Methodism in New Orleans was like a partridge in the wilderness. As the little Church was not yet entirely out of debt, the annual resolution of long standing was renewed, appointing William Winans "agent of the New Orleans Meetinghouse business."

John R. Lambuth, of the Mobile Mission, reported that our prospects were brightening, notwithstanding the most discouraging difficulties growing out of the general irreligion of the place, some misunderstandings among the few Church members, and the reduction and disorganization of the population during the yellow fever months. The church was inclosed, covered, and seated so that it could be used every Sabbath; but it was embarrassed with debt which the few members and patrons of the Church could not liquidate. The missionary appealed to the Conference for aid, and quite a number responded to his call. This writer, out of his little salary of one hundred dollars, gave ten dollars to help build the famous "old hive," as it was afterwards called, and has felt ever since that he was a stockholder in Mobile Methodism, and has always felt a thrill of joy at the mention of the "old hive," as it was his privilege to help put a few planks or shingles on the building.

The *Christian Advocate*, at New York, was just fairly getting into existence; and the Conference passed a resolution approving its design and promising to patronize it. In those days, if we received the paper three weeks after the date of publication, we thought it had come promptly.

The Sabbath exercises of this Conference were very impressive. Bishop Roberts preached the greatest sermon that day we ever heard from his lips. In addition to his manly voice and usual eloquence, he was full of sympathy and gospel power. His text was Isaiah ix. 6, 7: "Unto us a child is born," etc. The whole sermon was admirably conceived and

eloquently delivered; but when he was dwelling upon "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," he must have spoken as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. Such a burst of overpowering eloquence we never heard before or since, except once from Mark Moore and once from Henry B. Bascom. The ordination of deacons which followed was most impressive. Nothing would satisfy the community but that Bishop Roberts should preach another sermon, which he did on the last night of the Conference.

Bishop Soule also preached one of his lofty, logical, orthodox, and powerful sermons. He had not the easy-flowing, pathetic eloquence of Bishop Roberts, but there was a weight and emphasis in every sentence.

Our bishops still performed their continental journeys on horseback. Bishop Roberts's clothes at this Conference looked old and well-worn. It occurred to some of the young preachers that perhaps he was scarce of funds; and we quietly raised him a handsome little purse, which Robert L. Walker presented to him as a token of our high appreciation of his episcopal services. The Bishop received it gratefully.

Notwithstanding the resolutions and discussions of the anti-Masons, the Conference felt in honor bound to pass the following resolution before its close:

Resolved, That the Mississippi Annual Conference return their thanks to the Masonic Society of Tuscaloosa for generously furnishing them a room in which to hold their sessions, and that Dr. Robert L. Kennon be requested to make known this resolution to the Lodge.

After passing other complimentary resolutions and appointing its next annual session to meet either at Washington or Natchez, Miss., at the discretion of the preachers in charge and the presiding elder of the Washington District, on December 20, 1827, the appointments were announced and, after a session of eight days, the Conference adjourned.

By agreement we met in the Conference room at 6:30 A.M. to receive our appointments, so as to be able to make a half day's journey toward our different fields of labor. It was an interesting sight. We were not all dependent on the movements of stages, cars, or steamboats. There was not a wheeled conveyance in the Conference. Every preacher had his horse, and our horses were equipped and hitched around the Conference room. We entered the Conference in our traveling dress, including the inevitable spatterdashes on our legs. After a good pastoral address and prayer by Bishop Soule, we received our appointments and, forming in companies, were soon beyond the limits of Tuscaloosa, where we had spent a holy, happy, and profitable week with its generous inhabitants. There was nothing unusual in the appointments of this year. John R. Lambuth was returned to the Mobile Mission, and Peyton S. Greaves succeeded Benjamin M. Drake in New Orleans. The venerable William Stephenson was transferred from the Missouri Conference and appointed to our newly formed circuit in Natchitoches Parish. As we had reconnoitered the country and planned the circuit the preceding fall, we had hoped to be returned there to elaborate our new work; but in those days there was only one thing certain about

the appointments of the single men, which was that they were sure to have an appointment somewhere between Georgia and Texas. We were assigned to Marengo Circuit, in Alabama, four or five hundred miles east of where we had hoped to be sent. Lake Providence was added to the list of pastoral charges: and Ashley Hewitt was changed from the superannuated to the supernumerary relation, that he might be placed in charge of it. John P. Haney was sent to form a new circuit in St. Tammany Parish, La. An attempt was made to make a station of the town of Claiborne, on the Alabama River, and Thomas S. Abernathy was appointed in charge; but soon being convinced that he was throwing away his time on a work of little promise, he applied to his presiding elder for a change, and was sent as our colleague on Marengo for the remainder of the year. Already the people were pushing into the new territory lately acquired from the Choctaw Indians, and most of the old circuits all along on the southern boundary of the "New Purchase" had been extended into its territory. One new circuit had been formed, mostly in Copiah County, Miss., called Sweet Water, the name of one of its principal Churches and camp grounds, and Elisha Lott and Thomas Owens were assigned to it. The enlargement of the work in the Choctaw country made it necessary to divide the Mississippi District, the northern part retaining the name, with Thomas Griffin presiding elder, and the southern part called Washington, with William Winans presiding elder.

In 1820 the Federal government appointed Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, and Major Gen-

eral Thomas Hinds, of Mississippi, as commissioners on the part of the United States to negotiate a treaty with the Choctaw Indians for the purchase of near five and a half millions of acres of land lying in the southern portion of their territory. After all the preliminary steps had been taken, in the month of October the commissioners met the chiefs and other head men of the nation at Doak's Stand, on the old Natchez Trace, near the eastern limit of the present county of Madison, where, on the 20th of the month, the treaty was signed. The next session of the Legislature erected the whole ceded territory into one county called Hinds; but so rapidly was it settled that in a few years it was subdivided into more than a dozen counties. Many Methodist families, including some very valuable local preachers and other official members, soon settled all over this "New Purchase," as it was called for many years. These emigrants had been served by the local preachers with the assistance of the traveling preachers who labored on the old circuits just south of the "Purchase." From this date new circuits were organized, followed by new districts, until, in a few years, the whole territory was covered with pastoral charges. To keep up the old circuits and at the same time supply this new field, with the extension of the work in Western Louisiana, required all the available traveling preachers we could command.

About this time various sections of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States were agitated by an attempt to introduce a delegation of local preachers and laymen into the Annual and General Conferences. The proposed change in our form of

government was warmly advocated by a respectable minority of traveling and local preachers and influential laymen. Several periodicals were published in advocacy of the new measures, and various single pamphlets were industriously circulated among the people. Many very bitter surmises were written and published against the original framers of our Church government and against our bishops and the ruling majorities in our Annual and General Conferences. The Reformers, as they styled themselves, first took the name of "Union Societies," then that of "Associated Methodists," and finally seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church and organized themselves into what has since been known as the Methodist Protestant Church.

The Union Societies found a lodgment in Eastern Alabama; and the principles involved in the controversy found some zealous advocates, not only among the laity, but among the leading local and ex-traveling preachers, and quite a number ultimately united with the Methodist Protestant Church. Some of our pastoral charges east of the Alabama River were considerably convulsed by this unhappy family feud. In Western Alabama and Eastern Mississippi a few scattering local preachers and laymen left our Church and united with the new organization, but until a much later period it never had any organic form west of Pearl River. This we attributed to the sound judgment and conservative spirit of William Winans, John Lane, Thomas Griffin, Ira Byrd, and Ashley Hewitt. They took the ground that our entrance into and continued connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church was voluntary on our

part. We had first entered her pale on a probation of six months to give ourselves time to become acquainted with her doctrines, discipline, and usages before taking upon ourselves the vows of full membership; and having taken those vows voluntarily, we had virtually surrendered all right to inveigh either against the doctrines or disciplinary laws of the Church. If there was evident friction found in the practical working of our ecclesiastical machinery, or the enlargement of the Church or the introduction of new interests or any other plausible consideration suggested the importance of a change or readjustment in our Church polity, our only legal recourse was to petition the General Conference to make the desired change; and then, if we failed, the peace and harmony of the Church required us quietly to submit until the next legal opportunity offered to renew the effort. The General Conference might seem to act slowly, but it was certain to do in the end what was best for the interests of all concerned. They saw no danger whatever of either the episcopacy or itinerancy oppressing the members of the Church; and if ever they should attempt it, the body of the Church had the remedy in their own hands. By withholding their salaries they could be starved out of their authority. These conservative brethren saved all the western portion of the Conference from any agitation on the vexed question; and to this day there has been no secession from our Church either in Southwestern Mississippi or Louisiana. The great error committed by the leaders of the Union Societies was an overweening desire and determination to pluck the fruit before it was ripe

—to reap the harvest before it had time to mature. The time had not then come for the introduction of laymen into the Annual and General Conferences. The moneyed interests of the Church were small—the mere matter of collecting the little salaries of the itinerant preachers, building church houses, and the little Chartered Fund in Philadelphia and the Book Concern in New York—all of which could be attended to without lay representation in the higher Conferences. Since then the Church has increased immensely in numbers and wealth; the missionary and Sabbath school interests have been greatly enlarged; high schools, academies, colleges, and universities have been projected; improved styles of architecture have been adopted for our churches and other public buildings; to which may be added our vast publishing interests—all of which requires the best talents of the most experienced and skillful financiers in the Church. The itinerant preachers enter the ministry young, and afterwards, while engaged in the pastoral work, have little to develop their financial skill; and it is not to be expected that they should be able to manipulate successfully the large and ever-growing moneyed interests of the Church; nor would it be safe to divert their attention from the special duties of their holy calling to attend to what can be much better managed by the intelligent and skilled laymen of the Church. These considerations long ago suggested the importance, not to say imperious necessity, of having a strong lay element in our Annual and General Conferences. Long before it was incorporated in the Discipline as a law

of the Church, it had been adopted by a number of Annual Conferences—ours among the rest—and found to work well. It would now seem that the initial step taken in this matter by our General Conference would be speedily followed by all the large Wesleyan Methodist bodies on the globe.

All things considered, 1827 was a prosperous year, though the revival influence was not as productive as desired. A large number of camp meetings were held in the summer and fall, and they were attended with good results, some of them with unusual success. The well-directed and faithful labors of Orsamus L. Nash and Richard H. Herbert, two of our most enterprising young men, were much blessed on Chickasawhay Circuit, resulting in a net increase of about two hundred members. Mr. Nash was a man of medium height, heavy-built, with a commanding utterance, flaming zeal, and indomitable perseverance, and was generally successful. Mr. Herbert was yet a youth, fairly educated, with preaching talents above mediocrity, and wholly devoted to the work of the ministry. When we roomed with him (as we often did), generally the first thing we heard on awaking in the morning was his earnest whisper in prayer at the bedside. He often took a discouraging view of his progress in personal piety and his supposed want of influence as a minister of Christ, but he was to the end of his long pilgrimage a good and true man.

The Marengo Circuit had been partly formed the previous year by John Collier, but was still in a very immature condition, on account of being a newly settled region. It embraced Marengo and parts of

Dallas and Wilcox Counties, extending from the Tombigbee to the Alabama River. The land was generally good and lay very well, especially that celebrated section between Demopolis and Cahawba, known then as the "Canebrake," which was only partially settled by the first adventurers. The fertility of the soil and the contiguity of two navigable rivers had invited intelligent and wealthy families into the new settlements, among whom were a number of influential Methodists, such as the Easleys, Cades, Glovers, Gwinns, Christians, Bennetts, and many others. Most of them were still living in their first log cabins; and, with few exceptions, our preaching places were either private houses or small log cabins put up for the double purpose of school and church. We took into our work several new settlements, and made us a circuit of good size. About Linden, Whitehall, and a few other places the population was already numerous, so that our congregations, especially on the Sabbath, were large; but in the Canebrake region they were small. After getting our work properly organized in the spring, the Great Head of the Church began to pour out his Spirit abundantly on our labors, and we had a sweeping revival which resulted in the addition of about three hundred and fifty to the Church. The work of grace among the new settlers, especially among the young people, was deep and scriptural. The awakenings and conversions were remarkably clear and well marked with true repentance and a living, saving faith in Christ, succeeded by a bright experience of love, peace, and joy. On the 27th of September we commenced the first camp meeting

ever held in Marengo. The camp ground was at Glover's Church, near the residence of John O. Glover. It was, from beginning to end, a time of extraordinary spiritual power. That great and good man so long known in the Mississippi Conference as Rev. Preston Cooper was the first one converted at this camp meeting; and his conversion was followed by about fifty or sixty more, most of which were as clear as a sunbeam. This year, however, had its trials as well as its triumphs. There lived either within or near our circuit five Baptist preachers of the old Hard-shell order who suddenly became very zealous in the midst of our revival; and the conclusion of the whole matter was that all the young converts were sought to receive baptism by immersion at their hands as the only legitimate successors of John the Baptist and become members of the only true Church then extant. We were soon informed of their proselyting purposes, and determined to protect our young and growing flock; and not one of our large number of young converts—many of whom were connected with Baptist families—left us; and only a few, by special request, received baptism by immersion at our hands.

Thomas S. Abernathy was one of the most congenial, lovely, and forbearing colleagues. He married late in the year. Mr. Abernathy was not a controversialist, but as a Methodist preacher he was well read and sound to the core in doctrine and discipline. He preached a very clear, orthodox sermon, often attended with the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. He was, indeed, a true yokefel-

low in the blessed harvest of souls with which the Lord of the harvest favored us that year.

Our statistics show a net increase this year of thirteen hundred and forty-five white and five hundred and fifty-nine colored members. Our aggregate membership in the Conference was ten thousand one hundred and eighteen white and three thousand two hundred and eighty-three colored members, making a grand total of thirteen thousand four hundred and one. We have no death to record among our itinerant preachers this year.

CHAPTER V.

1828.

THE Conference which closed the business and labors of 1827 and inaugurated those of 1828 was held in the city of Natchez, Miss., commencing December 20, 1827. Bishop Soule presided, and William Winans was again elected Secretary. Considering the vast extent of territory, the expense of time and money, and the many difficulties to be encountered on a horseback journey in winter of from fifty to three or four hundred miles, to be repeated, in most instances, as soon as Conference was over, the attendance of the preachers was large. A goodly number of our Conference had never seen the majestic Father of Waters before; and when they stood on the bluff and beheld for the first time the sweep of the mighty river, bearing on its bosom fleets of flatboats heavily laden with Western produce, with the little steamboats of those days, and then took a survey of the apparent interminable level horizon extending westward, they were quite enraptured with the enchanting view. Steam whistles had not then been invented to announce the coming into port of a steamboat, and the little bells could be heard by only a small circle. The most noisy thing then known with which to announce the important event of a steamboat making for the landing was a small cannon mounted on wheels

and stationed on the forecastle deck, and well charged with a blank cartridge.

We had, in Natchez, a commodious one-story brick church, with galleries inside above the main audience room; but as we needed the church for daily and nightly preaching, we had to look elsewhere for a Conference room. The celebrated little chapel in the rear of the church, which for so many years was used for class and prayer meetings, love feasts, Quarterly and Annual Conferences, had not then been built. Horace Gridley was then the popular Sheriff of Adams County, and he courteously tendered us a suitable room in the courthouse, with side rooms for the use of the committees. A room that would seat fifty or sixty men was all we needed in those days, when none were permitted to be present except members of Conference and the undergraduates and local preachers, who were admitted as spectators by special grace. We have gradually departed from that plan of sitting in secret session with closed doors until now we admit everybody to witness our deliberations who will behave with decent propriety; so that it takes the largest audience rooms we can command to contain our enlarged Conference and numerous visitors. We rejoice that it is so. "Let there be light." Let the people witness all our deliberations and plans for enlarging and promoting the interests of the Church. It will tend to secure their prayers and coöperation. Bishop Soule was very exact in having the Conference opened and closed with suitable religious services. In those days, instead of closing with the apostolic benediction as we now do, a brother was called on

by the bishop to lead us in prayer, which often proved to be one of the moving sort of prayers under which our hearts were warmed and our spirits cheered with the manifested presence of the Master. This was the first time Bishop Soule had attended our Conference without the company of Bishop Roberts. He was very methodical and exact in the transaction of all Conference business. While he allowed due time to do everything maturely, he permitted no time to be misspent. The preachers had great respect for him personally, and a high appreciation of his pulpit and administrative talents; but until they became intimately acquainted with him they did not feel as free and easy in his presence as they did in associating with Bishop Roberts. Some even hinted that he had too much of what they called Yankee stiffness about him to suit the elasticity and freedom of Southern minds. When we became better acquainted with the Bishop, that feeling all wore off, and we looked on him as one of the greatest and one of the most affectionate officers in the Church. His judgment was remarkably correct and free from any improper bias, and we were assured that all our personal interests, as well as the interests of the Church, were as safe in his hands as they could be in the hands of mortal man. The Conference opened in due form, and all the preliminary arrangements showed a master's skill in getting ready for the dispatch of business. After fixing the hour of meeting and adjournment and appointing the usual committees, Bishop Soule introduced two distinguished visitors to the Conference who were invited to the freedom of our delib-

erations. The first was Rev. Peter Akers, of the Kentucky Conference, who visited us in the interest of Augusta College; and the second was the venerable Isaac Smith, of the South Carolina Conference, who was on a protracted visit to his daughter, Mrs. Hope Lenoir, living near Pearl River. They were both very interesting men, and their pulpit services were highly appreciated. Father Smith had been a Revolutionary soldier, and was with General Washington's army at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, where his soldierly conduct came very near depriving the world of the material out of which a first-class Methodist preacher was made in after years. He was slyly crawling on his hands and knees close to a fence, trailing his gun along, in order to draw a bead on a British picket, with intent to kill, when a ball from the enemy struck the ground just before him, and barely ricocheted high enough to miss his head, knocking the dirt in his face. Seeing that he was discovered by the enemy, he made a judicious retreat in double-quick time. The war ended, he returned to the peaceful avocations of life, got among the Methodists in his native Virginia, was converted, soon admitted a divine call to preach the gospel, and was received on trial into the Virginia Conference in the spring of 1784. In a few years he fell into the South Carolina Conference, where he traveled circuits, filled city stations, presided on districts, and was missionary among the Creek Indians in Western Georgia until he was disabled by extreme old age and took a superannuated relation. After devoting half a century with unusual success to the work of the ministry, he died

from a cancer on the extremity of the spine, July 20, 1834, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, aged seventy-six years.

After the introduction of these clerical visitors, the Conference took up the regular business. John Mathews, Samuel Walker, Robert D. Smith, William C. Gayle, John A. Cotton, Blanton P. Box, and Daniel H. Norwood were admitted on trial. William Leggatt, Anderson C. McDaniel, John W. Mann, William H. Turnley, Moses Perry, James A. Hughes, and Lewis S. Turner were continued on trial. Eugene V. Levert was discontinued at his own request. Richard H. Herbert, Joseph McDowell, Leroy Massengale, Orsamus L. Nash, Benjamin A. Haughton, and Jephthah Hughes were received into full connection, and all were ordained deacons except Leroy Massengale, who was not ordained until the next Conference. John Collier, formerly of this Conference, was readmitted in deacon's orders, and James H. Mellard, formerly of the South Carolina Conference, having been admitted into that Conference in 1801 and located in 1810, was readmitted into our Conference in elder's orders. He proved to be a very valuable acquisition until his advanced age led him to retire again to the local ranks in 1833. John Cotton, John G. Lee, Robert L. Walker, Thomas E. Ledbetter, Thomas S. Abernathy, and William M. Curtis were elected to elder's orders, and all ordained except John G. Lee, who was absent. John O. T. Hawkins, William Stephenson, Ashley Hewitt, and Thomas Owens were placed on the supernumerary roll, and Hugh A. McPhail was superannuated. John Cotton, John G. Lee,

Francis R. Cheatham, Benjamin Dulaney, John R. Lambuth, Elijah B. McKay, and Elisha Lott were located at their own request. The loss of seven effective men from our itinerant corps at one Conference was a very inconvenient loss. In order to supply each circuit with a preacher, we had to put young men just received on trial in charge of circuits without a colleague. In those days no living provision had been made for the families of our traveling preachers, there not being a parsonage in the Conference, and many were compelled to retire to the local ranks to provide homes for their families. Bishop Soule had said at our Conference two years ago, on the location of a preacher, that he hoped the time would come when the question, "Who have located this year?" would be stricken from the list of questions at an Annual Conference. It may be the easiest way to relieve the bishop and his council of embarrassment to suggest the location of a man no longer to be depended on to do "the work of an evangelist," but in every case where a man is physically, spiritually, and intellectually qualified to do the work of an itinerant preacher his location is an evil and a loss to the Church. Birdsong W. M. Minter, M.D., Richard Pipkin, James Thompson, Jesse Redwine, William Taylor, John Patton, and Archibald Pope, from the local brotherhood, were elected to deacon's orders, and none to elder's orders.

Rev. Peter Akers was allowed a suitable opportunity to address the Conference in the interest of Augusta College; and the Conference promised to patronize the institution. We perhaps wronged our own people by sending so much of our money

and patronage beyond the limits of our Conference before we determined to have a college of our own. We have learned to do better.

Dr. Robert L. Kennon, Dr. Alexander Talley, and William V. Douglass were appointed a committee to visit the Elizabeth Academy, at Washington, six miles distant, and examine into its status and report to the Conference; but the committee was afterwards excused, as there seemed to be no necessity for such examination and report, the Academy being in a prosperous condition.

Tuscaloosa had become a flourishing little city, and was one of the strongholds of Methodism in Alabama. The members and patrons of our Church in and around the city had become very anxious to establish a female academy there of high grade, and a gentleman by the name of Edward Simms made a generous proposition to this Conference through Rev. William Spruill, the stationed preacher, which was accepted. He proposed to build a suitable house on a lot of his own and place the premises under the entire control of the Conference, to be used exclusively for a female academy, until such time as the patrons of the school could purchase the property by paying him the original cost, with interest to date on the money vested, when he would settle it, in fee simple, on a Board of Trustees appointed by the Conference. Robert L. Kennon, William Spruill, Thomas E. Ledbetter, and Blanton P. Box were appointed a committee on the part of the Conference to negotiate with Mr. Simms for the transfer of the property; and Robert L. Kennon, B. B. Fontaine, Richardson Owen, Edward Simms, and Dennis Dent

were appointed a Board of Trustees to hold the property in trust for the purposes of its creation. A desire was expressed to have the building so far completed during the incoming year as to be able to open the Academy immediately after the next annual session of the Conference, which was to be held in Tuscaloosa.

The Conference again resolved to patronize the American Colonization Society, and recommended collections to be taken upon or about the 4th of July by all the preachers, and that the position of the Mississippi Conference in relation to the Society be published in the *African Repository* and the *Christian Advocate and Journal* at New York. By the motion of Benjamin M. Drake, a committee of one was appointed by the President, consisting of Mr. Drake himself, to draw up and publish a pastoral address to all the Churches within our bounds, laying before them the general state of the Church, with its present prospects, calling their attention to the subject of Sabbath schools, the importance of better attention to class meetings, the more ample support of our married traveling preachers, and the increasing necessity of building parsonages. Mr. Drake was the early and perpetual advocate of the parsonage system as an indispensable adjunct to our itinerant system. He richly deserved to live in a good parsonage, but died without the privilege.

The Conference had some unpleasant cases among a few of the licentiates to dispose of. John W. Mann, a probationer of two years, and Anderson C. McDaniel, a probationer of one year, were complained of for various indiscretions in their man-

ners, which rendered them unacceptable as preachers. John W. Mann was dropped from the list of those on trial by a vote of the Conference; but on a subsequent day, after promises of amendment on his part, his case was reconsidered, and he was continued on trial the third year; but there being no permanent improvement, at the next Conference he was finally discontinued. He was a young man of fair talents, but there was a determined rusticity in his manners which seemed incurable, and for which he was dropped after three years' trial. Anderson C. McDaniel was also very unclerical in his intercourse with the people both in public and private, for which the Conference voted him an admonition from the Bishop in the presence of the Conference, which he seemed to receive in the right spirit; but he did not improve, and was formally dropped at the ensuing Conference. "The Lord of the harvest" makes no mistakes in calling and sending forth his laborers, and where the most unpromising in human estimation "are truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ" to the office and work of the ministry, we may rest assured that, however hidden at first from our observation, they have all the implied talents to make acceptable and useful ministers of the New Testament, if they are obedient to their calling and faithful in discharging its duties. The body of ministers ought to be very faithful with and very forbearing toward uneducated and inexperienced young men in a state of trial in an Annual Conference; but our duty to the people, as well as to ourselves, requires that we lay them aside after sufficient trial attended with utter

failure. The Conference also decided not to continue Lewis S. Turner on trial a second year, but his case was reconsidered and he was continued. There was no objection either to his piety or prudence; but his educational advantages were extremely limited, he was excessively diffident, and improved so slowly that it was doubtful whether he could ever be developed into an acceptable and useful preacher. The trial of another year showed an encouraging outcome, and he was admitted into full connection and ordained a deacon. He graduated in due course to elder's orders and traveled in our Conference until the Alabama Conference was organized, in Tuscaloosa, Ala., November 27, 1832, when he became a member of that body. His health having become impaired, he located at the end of 1833. The forbearance of the Conference toward his illiteracy and his slowly developing talents was not without good results in the end.

The most painful occurrence of the Conference was that, the day before adjournment, some documents were received from New Orleans affecting the character of our late missionary in the city, Rev. Peyton S. Greaves. A committee of three, consisting of Robert L. Kennon, Barnabas Pipkin, and Benjamin M. Drake, were appointed to examine the documents and report thereon. They made a report the following morning, which was promptly rejected. What the report was, the Journal does not show. As it was now too late in the session, and the parties at too great a distance from each other to admit of a fair and legal investigation of the conduct of Mr. Greaves, the Conference appointed the preachers

who might be stationed in New Orleans and Natchez a committee to investigate the conduct of Mr. Greaves while in New Orleans and report the result to the presiding elder of the district in which he might receive his appointment. This committee consisted of William M. Curtis, stationed at New Orleans, and Benjamin M. Drake, stationed at Natchez. Mr. Greaves was appointed to the Alabama Circuit as the junior of James H. Mellard, with Robert L. Kennon as the presiding elder of the Cahawba District. Mr. Greaves allowed himself to feel that this appointment was degrading to him, and he damaged his already arrested reputation by the lack of a cheerful submission to the appointing power. The fall and perversion of Mr. Greaves was a heavy though unavoidable calamity on our Conference. Though a man of superior talents, somehow he was not very well balanced, and some indiscretions heretofore had called for the forbearance of his brethren. He seemed fully to appreciate his appointment as missionary to New Orleans, and entered upon his work with becoming zeal and prosecuted it faithfully until the usual season for the yellow fever visitation, when he left on a long visit to relatives in Mississippi and Alabama. While he remained in the city he preached to good white and colored congregations in our little church on Gravier Street, adding some white and a large number of colored members to the classes; got up a Sabbath school for the colored children numbering about seventy-five, a number of whom learned to read the New Testament fluently; established preaching, in conjunction with other ministers, to

the marines on board the ships in the port of New Orleans; preached weekly to about two hundred convicts in the State prison, and distributed tracts among them; after sometime in April, by special request, he preached on every Monday evening about three miles above the city at a place called the Port of Orleans; and in all these departments, according to his report to the Missionary Secretary in July, he had encouraging success. He also took an enlarged Christian view of the densely settled coast above and below New Orleans, which contained many American families, and warmly advocated the introduction of missionaries among them. Alas that all these brightening prospects should have been blighted by an accusation of malfeasance in a money matter involving little over one hundred dollars! Whether Mr. Greaves intentionally did wrong or not, his connection with this little money affair got up such an excitement against him in New Orleans that it was thought best not to return him to the city. He was anxious to return, and was deeply mortified at not being returned. He went to Alabama with wounded feelings, and was especially grieved with a few of our leading ministers who he supposed were personally inimical to him. He indulged those ill feelings by writing and talking against some of his brethren until he greatly injured his spirituality. The committee appointed to investigate Mr. Greaves's conduct in New Orleans found ground of complaint against him, and referred their report to the presiding elder of the Cahawba District.

Bishop Soule, on the Sabbath included in the

Conference session, preached one of his grand, weighty, and strictly orthodox sermons; and, from a conviction that its publication would be of great benefit both to our preachers and people, the Conference, by formal vote, requested a copy for publication. The Bishop did not absolutely refuse, but it was evident from his remarks that he did not wish to comply. He said that he never wrote a sermon before he preached it; that if after he preached it he thought it worth preserving for future use, while it was fresh in his mind, he wrote such a memoranda as would enable him to call it up as occasion required. A copy of the Bishop's sermon for publication was never forthcoming.

On the motion of William M. Curtis a resolution was introduced to decline the reappointment of any preacher to any pastoral charge who at the breaking out of any epidemic disease, such as yellow fever, should leave his work while he was himself in good health. The motion was earnestly discussed and finally referred to a special committee, who never reported. We had several cities in our Conference that were almost yearly visited by epidemic yellow fever; and as the law of the Church limited the appointments of the preachers in those cities to two years, it was thought by many of our most judicious ministers to be risking too much to submit to an acclimating for so short a time. The discussion of the subject, however, resulted in a wise modification of the pastoral term in New Orleans, which was the place most dreaded on account of yellow fever. The General Conference held this year—1828—by special law authorized the Bishops to

continue a preacher indefinitely in New Orleans. This special arrangement for New Orleans was continued until the pastoral term was extended to four years, and pastoral charges so multiplied in the city that an acclimated pastor can be continued there a lifetime, if necessary, without any violation of law.

The Mississippi Female Assistance Society, at Washington, Miss., under the superintendence of Mrs. Caroline Matilda Thayer, Miss Mary Burruss, and other highly cultivated and zealous ladies of that community, continued to favor us annually with their contributions to eke out the salaries of our deficient itinerants who labored on the poorer circuits and in the new settlements. This year they sent us four hundred and seventy dollars and thirty-seven and a half cents. The Conference acknowledged the kindness of those "elect ladies" by appointing some one to address them a letter expressive of our gratitude for their generosity. The Conference approved, by formal resolution, Bishop Soule's determination to send a missionary to the Choctaw Indians. Dr. Alexander Talley was the man, if not the only man, in our Conference capable of superintending this important mission, and we came very near losing his invaluable services by an incident which occurred during our present session. While Dr. Talley was living in Southeastern Alabama he had evidently sympathized with those who styled themselves "Reformers" and were advocating various radical changes in our Church polity, at least so far as to encourage by his personal influence a free and full discussion of the mooted

points. He had, when appointed two years before to the Louisiana District, determined to abandon all further discussion of those vexed questions and devote his remaining days exclusively to the work of an Episcopal Methodist preacher, a determination religiously adhered to. A few of our preachers allowed themselves to have some doubt of the Doctor's loyalty to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and one of them, in writing to a young preacher in the Louisiana District, incautiously advised him to guard against being led astray by Dr. Talley's erratic views of Church government. The young preacher did not understand what his correspondent alluded to. At Conference he called on the parties to explain. Thus the private correspondence came to the Doctor's ears; and so conscious was he of his innocence, and so deeply wounded to think that one of the leading members of Conference would endeavor by private correspondence to prejudice one of his preachers against him, that he peremptorily asked a location, which was sorrowfully granted. The Doctor retired for the remainder of the day, and gave himself up to meditation and prayer. His troubled mind resumed its wonted calmness. He saw the impropriety, even gross injustice, of retiring from a Conference that had the utmost confidence in his loyalty to Episcopal Methodism, and loved him most dearly, because of the indiscretion of one or two members. He was early in the Conference room next morning and asked for a reconsideration of the vote by which he was located, remarking that the tie which bound him to us was too strong to be broken by any movement on his part. His request

was instantly granted. There was an audible thrill of joy in the Conference at the triumph of grace. Suppose Dr. Talley had then located permanently, he might have gone into comparative, if not utter, obscurity and died without even a recorded obituary. But his success in establishing a pure Christianity in the Choctaw Nation of Indians has gained for him an immortality which will be coeval with the history of our aboriginal missions.

We elected the following delegates to our ensuing General Conference, which was to assemble in the city of Pittsburg, Pa., May 1, 1828: William Winans, John C. Burruss, Robert L. Kennon, Thomas Griffin, Benjamin M. Drake, and Barnabas Pipkin. They all attended except John C. Burruss, who was kept at home by domestic affliction. As our little wooden church in New Orleans, on Gravier Street, was not yet entirely out of debt, in the usual quaint language of the Journal, "On motion, William Winans and Edward McGehee were reappointed agents of the New Orleans Meetinghouse business." Don't be discouraged! Methodism will loom up in New Orleans after a while. Her bright and glorious day of triumph is already dawning.

The next session of the Conference was appointed to be held in Tuscaloosa, Ala., commencing December 25, 1828. After an impressive address from Bishop Soule the appointments were announced, the Conference adjourned, and we immediately scattered to the four winds, as intent on doing our part to bring the world into subjection to Christ as ever. Indeed, after listening to one of Bishop Soule's thrilling addresses at the close of his Conferences about

the honor not only of laboring but of suffering in the cause of the Captain of our salvation, we felt like aspiring to deeds of heroic daring.

We were able to station only fifty preachers in our vast Conference territory, and several of them on the supernumerary roll. We note only a few of the appointments. Any one wishing to see them all can find them in the General Minutes. William Stephenson succeeded Alexander Talley on the Louisiana District, which now included five pastoral charges with an effective preacher on each except Lake Providence, where Ashley Hewitt still labored as a supernumerary. William M. Curtis was appointed to the New Orleans Mission and Thomas Burpo to that of Mobile—both good and faithful men, and above mediocrity in their pulpit abilities. Port Gibson, including one or two country appointments detached from Bayou Pierre Circuit, was made a station, with John O. T. Hawkins in charge. Bayou Pierre Circuit was divided. The southern half, lying mainly in Jefferson County on the waters of Coles Creek, received the name of Coles Creek; and the northern division retained the name of Bayou Pierre, and was extended eastward through Copiah County to include what had been Sweet Water Circuit. The preacher on Big Black Circuit was expected to follow up the new settlers in Hinds and Madison Counties as far as he had time and strength. Nearly half of Warren County, northeast of the open woods lately acquired from the Choctaw Indians, was being rapidly settled, as was also Yazoo County farther up the ridge between the Yazoo and Big Black Rivers. The preach-

er on Warren Circuit was expected to give what attention he could to those new settlements. The writer this year was in charge of Warren Circuit, which embraced the entire county, including the young but growing city of Vicksburg. He was favored with the greatest revival ever known in Warren County up to that date. A large number of the most substantial citizens of the county, including the Wrens, Gibsons, Lums, Gillespies, Whitakers, and many others, were added to the Church, most of whom were examples of piety until death. A glorious camp meeting was held at a place known as Wren's camp ground. At this camp meeting Thomas Griffin, the presiding elder, preached on Sunday a most powerful sermon. His text was (Acts xiii. 41): "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." The power of the Spirit without measure seemed to rest both upon the preacher and the vast, awe-struck congregation. No more sinners were ever awakened under one of his sermons than were cut to the heart that day. The main body of his sermon was a successive declaration of incontrovertible facts illustrative of what God had wrought through the preaching of the gospel in the face of opposition from the despisers of Christianity. That sermon was like the lightning and thunder and flame on Sinai's burning brow. Numbers were received into the Church who dated their awakening from that sermon. John Lane, who was then local near Vicksburg, was our faithful and successful colaborer. The dear old patriarch,

Rev. Randall Gibson, the first man that ever joined the Methodist Episcopal Church south and west of the great Indian Nations, lived in the midst of the circuit, and, as a local preacher, was finishing up the work of a long life about as the apostle John did. Then, in the Open Woods, there was that indomitable little, decrepit layman, Richard Featherstun, who in times of altar work hopped about on his rheumatic limbs as nimble as a sparrow. Another fact was one of the chief causes of this great revival: a large number of those who were brought into the kingdom of grace were the children of prayer. The Lums had been brought up by William and Rachel Foster, of Pine Ridge, at whose house our first Conference attended by a bishop was held. The numerous branches of the Gibson family were also the children of many prayers and much Christian solicitude; and the same may be said of many others. God will not suffer the expectations of his faithful people to be disappointed. The young converts immediately betook themselves to the discharge of every duty, and both men and women soon became active and happy in bearing their part in all the social meetings of the Church, in singing, praying, and exhorting one another. Many of them became great camp meeting folks; and such was their efficiency and success in the altar, tent, and woods prayer meetings that they became extensively known as the Warren County Fire Company. The Gibsons especially excelled in the service of song. Gadi Gibson was certainly called of God to sing, judged by his well-trained and manly voice, trembling with emotion as he led the

congregational choir in that delightful spiritual exercise.

Early in the fall we penetrated to the upper part of Yazoo County, held a two days' meeting at the house of a Brother Rule, organized a class, and appointed Burwell Scott class leader. This settlement was on the waters of Cypress Creek, and this society was the nucleus of the famous old Ebenezer Church, so celebrated in after years for its lively membership and good camp meetings. We also consolidated what members we found in and around Vicksburg into a regular Church organization. The first class consisted of Rev. John Lane and his family, including several of Rev. Newet Vick's children, Dr. Thomas Anderson and wife, Thomas Berry and wife, John Conn and wife, Mrs. Frances Cornell, Mrs. Minerva Wren (now the widow of Hon. W. L. Sharkey), Mrs. Mary Hashburger, Miss Matilda Ferguson, and others. The usual place of worship was the upper story of a small frame building fitted up for a court room. The first two days' meeting in Vicksburg was held in a vacated hotel known as the Steamboat Hotel, which was tendered for the occasion by its owner, whose name was Cowan. At this meeting there was received into the Church the first probationer, whose name was William Christian. The little Society was soon strengthened by other members moving into Vicksburg, so that in a few years it became a separate pastoral charge. Little change was made in the other districts and pastoral charges for the want of preachers to occupy new circuits. A goodly number of local preachers emigrated to the Choctaw Purchase and supplied

many destitute neighborhoods with the public means of grace and prepared the way for the entrance of the itinerants in after years. In the Alabama part of our Conference our faithful pioneer traveling and local preachers and lay members had laid a broad and solid foundation upon which to build a model superstructure of aggressive and progressive Methodism, and no section of our Mississippi Conference has ever produced better specimens of preachers and laymen than the department of Alabama.

John Mathews, received on trial at the late Conference, was converted in Claiborne County, Miss., in the vicinity of Dow's Mill. Soon he was called to take part in class and prayer meetings, and exhibited a fine gift for extemporaneous prayer. After twelve years of shrinking from duty his brethren rejoiced at the opportunity of recommending him for license to preach, and he was accordingly licensed and recommended to the itinerancy. He therefore entered the Conference, and traveled seven consecutive years, serving nearly all the large circuits within his reach, for his family was too large to itinerate with him. He graduated to elder's orders, and was everywhere esteemed for his piety, talents, and close adherence to the doctrines and discipline of the Church. Afterwards he retired to the local ranks and labored in the ministry respected and beloved until the close of life. He was one of the few men who could comprehend, retain, and successfully use Watson's Institutes in the pulpit. He has left the savor of a good name in all the country where he went preaching the gospel.

Robert D. Smith, who was admitted on trial at

the same Conference, became a man of mark, and labored in itinerant work about eighteen years before his triumphant entrance into heaven. He was born of Presbyterian parents, in Lancaster County, Pa., October 21, 1802, but was mainly brought up in Champaign County, Ohio. After attaining the age of majority, he came to Wilkinson County, Miss., and opened a school in a Methodist church on Percy's Creek. While here, he boarded with Mr. James Laird and his excellent wife, who were consistent members of our Church. Mr. Smith was strongly prejudiced against the Methodists, but his association with this amiable and pious family removed his prejudices and opened the way for him to be benefited by Methodist preaching, which he regularly attended in the church where he taught his school. Under the preaching of Thomas Clinton and Barnabas Pipkin, who were on Wilkinson Circuit in 1824, he was awakened and united with the Church on Percy's Creek.

Mr. Smith was licensed to exhort in the fall of 1826 and commenced traveling with Miles Harper on Pearl River Circuit. Early in 1827 he was licensed to preach, and employed the remainder of the year by Mr. Winans, the presiding elder, first on Wilkinson and afterwards on Pearl River Circuit, from whence he was recommended to the Annual Conference. He was appointed this year in charge of Amite Circuit, with Isaac V. Enochs as his colleague, subject to the call of Dr. Talley to go as assistant missionary to the Choctaw Nation. In the summer he received from the Doctor a letter stating that the increasing religious interest among the In-

dians required his services immediately. Mr. Smith at once repaired to Washington, where the family of John W. Bryan furnished him with a portable cloth tent, camp kettle, and other little conveniences for camp life, with which he set off in time to reach the Nation on the 15th of August. For the next eighteen years he was one of the most laborious ministers in the Mississippi Conference.

William Stephenson, who was this year presiding elder of the Louisiana District, was one of the most interesting and useful ministers in the Conference. He was born of Presbyterian parents in South Carolina, near a place called Ninety-Six, October 4, 1768. He was the subject of early religious impressions, which he attributed to the teaching, example, and prayers of his pious mother. About 1792 he emigrated to Tennessee; and on the first day of June, 1800, he was converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. He labored as a local preacher until 1815, when he was admitted on trial into the Tennessee Conference, which then embraced Missouri. He was forty-seven years old when he entered the itinerancy, and yet he was connected with Annual Conferences thirty-nine years. His first appointment was to a circuit in Missouri called Bellevue. At the end of that year Missouri and Arkansas were erected into a separate Conference called Missouri, in the bounds of which Mr. Stephenson continued to labor—mostly in Southern Arkansas—until 1826, when he moved to Northern Louisiana. and in 1827 was transferred to the Mississippi Conference. During his connection with Annual Conferences he labored on circuits twelve years and on

large districts ten; the remainder of the thirty-nine or forty years he was superannuated on account of extreme old age, having died in the eighty-ninth year of his age. Mr. Stephenson was a small man, compactly built, lithe and active, and capable of great endurance; with rather a small face, long nose, and a natural or accidental defect in the upper lid of one eye, by which the ball was about half obscured, which gave him, when quiet, a sleepy appearance. When in a state of repose, there was nothing in his countenance to indicate his superior intellectuality but the luster of his quick, flashing, and penetrating eye. He had not the shadow of a doubt as to the truth of the glorious and awful doctrines of the gospel, and he preached in view of the final results of the gospel scheme both to those who received it and those who rejected it. In all his public exercises he was short and direct. In his prayers, exhortations, and sermons there was nothing redundant on the one hand, while on the other there was no deficiency. The most listless and capacious hearers could not justly complain of the length of his prayers or sermons, and they could not be uninterested. He was a sharpshooter, and everybody was apt to be hit somewhere who came within the range of his gospel missiles. He was in the proper sense a revivalist. He was, with his excellent wife, industrious and economical in his domestic affairs, and always seemed to have a comfortable living; but devoting himself so exclusively to the work of the ministry, mostly in new countries, he passed through his long life with but little property. He had been placed on the superannuated list

temporarily several times before, but he was seventy-nine years old when he filled his last pastoral charge and was finally superannuated. He enjoyed a high state of communion with God to the last, and died in holy triumph March 5, 1857, in his eighty-ninth year.

Among the local preachers elected to deacon's orders at the late Conference is the name of Dr. Birdsong W. M. Minter. He was born August 11, 1793, in Chatham County, N. C. His parents were worthy members of the Baptist Church. When ten or twelve years old, there was a great revival of religion among the Baptist Churches in his vicinity, attended with those extraordinary bodily exercises which were so common among the Presbyterians and Methodists in Tennessee and Kentucky about the same period. Some would fall suddenly to the ground and lay apparently lifeless for some time; others would leap and dance for joy; while others would manifest the distraction and rage of despair. He believed the hand of God was in this great work, and became unspeakably distressed because he was not a subject of those physical exercises upon which so much stress was laid as evidences of a work of grace. Fearing that he was more sinful than those who were favored, as he thought, with those outward manifestations, he betook himself to private prayer; and soon, while pouring out the full tide of "a broken and a contrite heart," he felt the forgiveness of his sins and was filled with unspeakable joy. When he arose from his knees and looked around, he felt as though every visible object united with him in adoring and praising the God of love. As he was a

mere child, thought by many to be too young for Church membership, little attention was paid to his religious state by the leaders in Church matters. It was the fault of the Church that this tender lamb of Christ's flock was left to struggle alone with temptation. The members of the Church paid little attention to him, gave him little instruction and encouragement, leaving it all for the Lord to do, as they said. The result was that he became discouraged, declined in his religious enjoyment, lost his assurance of the power of God, and neglected his private prayers. However, from about the age of fifteen years he generally led a very moral life, and daily attended to his private prayers. He often thought seriously about joining the Church, but found great difficulty in settling his religious creed. He felt, with the Bible in his hand, that he could not be a Calvinist, and to unite with a Calvinistic Church would, in his estimation, be a damaging inconsistency. In steering away from the horrors of Calvinistic reprobation he fell into the vagaries of Universalism, believing it more consonant with a God whose nature is love to save all men ultimately than to create a number of angels and men merely for the purpose of displaying his vindictive wrath in their damnation. Being yet unacquainted with the orthodox Arminian creed, he wandered on alone in the service of God, without an assurance of his acceptance in Christ until the fall of 1821. When he was about nineteen years of age, the family removed to Tennessee. His parents being in good circumstances had given him a good literary education; and soon after his removal to Tennessee he com-

menced the study of law, but some incident changed his purpose to the study of medicine. He placed himself under the preceptorship of Dr. James C. O'Reilly, of Maury County, Tenn., and after prosecuting his studies successfully for some time he came down to Jefferson County, Miss., in 1815, and taught school in the neighborhood of Caneridge Church. After replenishing his funds, he returned to Tennessee and resumed his medical studies under his former preceptor until he gave him a certificate of his entire qualification to practice medicine and surgery and recommended him highly as a young gentleman of rigid probity and unblemished morality. He then returned to Mississippi; and after having obtained the necessary credentials from the Board of Medical Censors, and being united in marriage to Miss Nancy Mariah Watkins, a former pupil of his, in 1820, he settled in the village of Shanks-town in the practice of his profession. He was very attentive to preaching and respectful to all religious worship, but at this time was not a professor of religion, though an honest inquirer after truth. In the summer of 1821 John Seaton, who was on Claiborne Circuit, held a two days' meeting at the first Caneridge Church, assisted by Moses Trader, an ex-member of the Ohio Conference. On the Sabbath the vast congregation was provided for under the shade of the trees, and a log of large size substituted for a pulpit. Mr. Trader preached a very convincing and overwhelming sermon on the subject of free salvation to all who would accept it on gospel terms, and inevitable and hopeless damnation to all who persistently neglected it. Dr. Minter, William M.

Curtis, and John G. Jones (all of whom became ministers), with many others, were powerfully awakened under that sermon, and received their first decided bias toward the Methodist Church. Dr. Minter said he had now found the doctrine upon which his faith could rest satisfied, and forever rejected both Calvinism and Universalism, and turned his attention to a careful study of the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In about two months, at the Red Lick Camp Meeting, he and his young wife united with the Church. Returning home, he immediately established family prayer and commenced a systematic observance of all his assumed obligations as a professed follower of Christ. In a short time, at one of the ordinary Church meetings at Ebenezer, near his residence, where he had placed his membership, he received an overwhelming sense of the favor and love of God. The Doctor was now a new man; and, in accordance with that most admirable and universal plan of the Methodists in those days, he was immediately invited to take an active part in the social meetings of the Church. He procured a small library of our standard works; and being a rapid and retentive reader, he soon became familiar with the doctrines, history, and usages of the Church of his choice. He was licensed to preach by the District Conference in the fall of 1822, and for about seventeen years was received everywhere as one of our most talented and influential local preachers. He was quite above the ordinary size of men, and after passing the age of thirty-five he was quite inclined to corpulency; his head was large, his hair dark, and his eyes blue;

he had a large oval face finely chiseled and a countenance mild and expressive of universal benevolence. He was refined and polished in his manners and had personal dignity enough for an archbishop, blended with the most affectionate simplicity of innocent childhood. His mind was remarkably symmetrical, and its native superiority and advanced cultivation were plainly visible; yet such were his social qualities that the most unlettered of his brethren felt free from embarrassment in their intercourse with him. He was a critical scholar. The writer acknowledges him as the best and most faithful literary friend he ever had. He watched over us with a brother's care from 1822, when we first began to speak in public, until his death, in 1839; and if he noticed any error in our pronunciation, use of a word, or construction of a sentence, he never failed to embrace the first opportunity in private to point it out and make the necessary correction. As we entered the ministry with a very limited education, we devoutly thank God to this day for blessing us with such a competent and faithful preceptor as Dr. Minter. He became noted as one of the very best physicians in all the country. The accession of Dr. and Mrs. Minter to our Church was the entering wedge of Methodism into the family of our worthy fellow-citizen, Mr. Asa Watkins. The mother and all the daughters and several of the sons, with their descendants, became Methodists; and two of the sons, Rev. William H. Watkins, D.D., and Rev. Calvin C. Watkins, became itinerant ministers, and are now (1875) members of the Mississippi Conference. This is a fact that we have often noticed with great

pleasure. If the first of a family who unite with our Church become spiritual Christians and live consistently pious lives, the other members of the family are apt to follow them in forming their Church relations, even from generation to generation. Dr. Minter was noted for his liberality. After having acquired a competency by his practice in Jefferson County with several leading families, he removed to Madison County, in the New Purchase, and procured lands when they were cheap, and by selling them after they appreciated in value he became possessed of a fine estate. This only made his liberality the more extensive. His first care, after contributing to the erection of a neighborhood church, was the support of his pastor and presiding elder; then came the missionary and colonization causes and the Methodist Book Concern, lately destroyed by fire; then came the interest of education, which always lay near his heart. He never had any children of his own to educate, and yet few men with children were more devoted to the cause of liberal education than he was. He was one of the most prominent and liberal projectors and builders of the town of Sharon, with its churches and male and female colleges, and at the time of his death one could stand on his gallery and see thousands of dollars' worth of public property brought into usefulness by his liberality and influence. On one side of his house could be seen a twelve-acre lot occupied by the Methodist church and public cemetery; adjoining this, a twenty-five-acre lot, on which was the presiding elder's parsonage with its ample surroundings; and another twenty-five-acre lot, on which

stood the parsonage for Madison Circuit—all donated in fee simple to the Church. On the other side were the male and female colleges, with other buildings important to seminaries of learning—to all of which he contributed largely of his money and influence. The Doctor's commanding person filled a pulpit admirably; his voice was manly and his delivery was like the graceful flowing of a smooth river; his style was pure Wesleyan, and he preached exclusively on doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Though often urged by his brethren in the ministry, he would never consent to receive elder's orders, assigning as a reason that, while he was satisfied of his call to be a lay preacher, he could not say that he felt in his heart "truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the order of elder." For six or eight years before his death he was gradually declining under the influence of some disease which was difficult to detect. Finally, in the fall of 1838, he became satisfied that his end was near. On the 28th of October he preached his last sermon in the church at Sharon, and felt a strong conviction while in the pulpit that it was his last, and made known his impression to his congregation. On the last night of 1838, by his request, a few brethren met at his house and united with him in watch night services, that he might renew his covenant with God and enter the new year with greater devotion to his service. On the 10th of March, 1839 (the church being near his house), he met with us in love feast for the last time. He rose to his feet, emaciated and trembling with extreme weakness,

and said that his confidence in the truth of Christianity was unshaken; that it was just what he had taken it to be in health and sickness, in life and in death; that he was then unspeakably happy, and had never been more so. He then bade us as a Church an affectionate and final farewell on earth, saying that he expected to meet with us no more in our militant state. We were then his nearest neighbor; and when the labors of a large district would permit, we spent much of our time, day and night, by his bedside, and never before had we learned so fully how rationally, how calmly, how full of joy and triumph a mature Christian could descend to the tomb. He had religious services regularly in his chamber, in which he always joined. He was never gloomy or low spirited. He often conversed about his approaching death with his usual broad, benevolent, and happy smile, amounting almost to laughter. He requested the writer to preach his funeral, and selected for the text 1 Timothy i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." This was most religiously observed in the presence of one of the largest congregations ever gathered in the Sharon church. On the 10th of April, 1839, just as the sun was sinking below the horizon, he quietly fell asleep and entered into rest.

CHAPTER VI.

1828.

It was a sublime spectacle to see Dr. Alexander Talley, with what personal and camp equipments one horse could carry, plunge into the almost unbroken forests of the Choctaw Nation of Indians. Dr. Talley was a highly cultivated man, a minister and physician. Socially, he had moved in our most intelligent, wealthy, and refined society. All this he exchanged for a wandering life in Indian wilds, where he often slept on the ground with only his cloth tent to shield him from the dews and rain and sleet, with coarse fare and coarser associates in the way of Indian hunters and warriors, and with no pecuniary compensation in prospect beyond a very meager sustenance. But why did he (now beyond the middle of life) make this great sacrifice and doom himself to certain poverty, suffering, and exhausting toil? "The love of Christ constrained him." He was unwilling for those "to perish for whom Christ had died" if he could become instrumental in their salvation. And why should he not feel just that way? Was he not in the regular apostolic succession? Why, then, like his great Exemplar, should he not transcend the limits of civilization to preach the gospel to the heathen? Dr. Talley had now been in the ministry about nineteen years, and had labored in circuits and city stations,

and for the last two years had been on the Louisiana District; but no young man in the Conference received his appointment more cordially than he did. He seemed to feel called of God to preach the gospel to our heathen neighbors, who had hitherto been "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." He was now a widower, without children, and had no domestic ties nor secular business to prevent his entire devotion to his new field of labor. As soon after Conference as he could get his outfit ready he went to the Nation. He first sought an acquaintance with the chiefs, several of whom were partly white and could speak broken English. Numbers of white men also had married Indian women and were settled on the highways as innkeepers or tradesmen, and became serviceable in entertaining him and introducing him to the natives. Hitherto the missionaries of other denominations had thought that the way to approach these benighted sons and daughters of Adam was through the enlightenment and cultivation of their intellectual faculties. Hence they generally located a missionary station, preached through an interpreter to as many as would come to hear them, established a school for the education of the young, taught the common arts of civilized life, and by this slow process hoped to raise up a generation of Christians. Dr. Talley believed that the gospel, preached "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," was adapted to save the most illiterate and fallen of our race. Hence he commenced at the heart and sought its regeneration and renewal "in righteousness and true holiness."

He taught them in short paragraphs the history of man's creation and fall, his universal depravity and helplessness as a sinner, and his consequent unfitness for heaven and exposure to hell; then he would add a paragraph on the atonement, with all manifestations of divine pity and love for lost man; and then another on the nature and necessity of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," showing that sinners of every grade were capable by the power of the Holy Ghost of performing these conditions of salvation, enforcing all by the usual promises of salvation here from the power of sin and of glory hereafter. And were not the views of Dr. Talley entirely scriptural? Dr. Talley did not propose to establish a missionary station, but to travel a missionary circuit; hence, after securing the best available interpreter, he traveled from neighborhood to neighborhood preaching the word everywhere, with the usual attendants of singing, praying, and private instruction. From the fact that his first interpreters were not themselves converted he found it difficult to explain the nature of experimental religion, but he seemed to have divine assurance that the blessing of God would follow his own word and make it accomplish that whereto he sent it. It was some time after he entered the Nation before he could get an interpreter of any sort to travel with him. During this interval he spent his time mainly in visiting and teaching the whites, half-bloods, and others who could understand some English. Finding that the Presbyterian missionary stations and schools were exclusively in the eastern and northern parts of the Nation, and that the

Western District, lying on the head waters of Pearl and Big Black Rivers, was entirely destitute of missionary labor, he determined to devote his attention mainly to it. The ruling family of this district was by the name of Leflore. A French adventurer by the name of Leflore had married a Choctaw woman and settled as a trader and inn-keeper on the Natchez and Nashville Trace at a place long known as the French Camps, not far north of the present town of Kosciusko. By this marriage Leflore had a large family of children—well-behaved, industrious, and thrifty for half-blood Indians. One of the young women married a white man by the name of Reuben Harris, a mail contractor on the Natchez and Nashville Trace. In 1828 he lived just north of the Indian line, near Doak's Stand. He had quite a family of pretty, orange-complexioned children, and kept a good wayside stopping place. Another one of the girls married a white man by the name of Wilson, who kept a good eating and lodging house on the Robison Road. One of the young men, Benjamin Leflore, married a light-colored Indian woman and brought up a beautiful family of brunette daughters. He also lived on the Robison Road, east of Yokanoocana River, and kept an excellent stand for travelers. He remained on his reservation when his tribe immigrated to the West, and brought up and educated his family as did his white neighbors. His daughters were received into the best society (as they deserved to be), and all married white men. The most talented and influential of all the Leflore family was Col. Greenwood Leflore, at this time Chief

of the Western District. When a youth, Greenwood was sent to Nashville, Tenn., to be educated. He assumed the costume and manners of a young gentleman of quality, behaved well, and kept the best society. It was known that he belonged to a wealthy and influential family in his Nation. While in Nashville, he won the heart and hand of a beautiful maiden belonging to an elevated family. Her parents not consenting to the marriage, true to the instincts of her affections and pledged fidelity, she eloped and came with her husband to his home on Yokanoocana. She had married him with the expectation of becoming identified with the Nation. Colonel Leflore had an ample fortune, and drew around his family all the comforts of civilization. William Leflore, a younger brother, married a light-complexioned Cherokee woman of very ladylike appearance. They also adopted the costume and manners of their white neighbors. Col. Greenwood Leflore, having been elected Chief of the Western District, took a patriotic interest in everything that tended to the civilization and Christianization of his people. He received Dr. Talley with a liberal hospitality, and cordially invited him to make his headquarters at his house. The Doctor gladly accepted the invitation, being assured that the patronage of the Chief would greatly tend to the promotion of the mission. Greenwood Leflore was a fluent public speaker and a first-class interpreter. William Leflore was also a good interpreter, and the two brothers were of great service to the mission as local interpreters. The Doctor was also greatly aided by others who, though they could not be de-

pended upon to interpret his religious discourses, could tell the people who he was, who sent him among them, and what was the object of his mission. Early in April Dr. Talley procured an interpreter to travel with him, but soon found that his native timidity would not admit of his interpreting to large congregations. To obviate this difficulty he adopted the plan of family visiting, and would pitch his tent near one or more huts and propose either to receive them at his tent or to go to their huts to teach them the truths of Christianity. They generally preferred coming to his tent, and there were often gathered from twenty-five to fifty persons, to whom he would discourse from one to two hours, frequently delivering two such discourses on the same day at different places. When he visited the larger villages, he would pitch his tent near the headman's house and secure his patronage, which was generally very cordially granted. He would then send out his interpreter to invite all who were disposed to come to his tent and hear the good talk that their Great Father above had sent them. He would continue this course for several days until he could see that an interest was awakened, and then he would appoint a general assembly to hear a summing up of what he had been teaching them in the smaller assemblies. He was often greatly encouraged by the respectful solemnity with which they listened; and from the hope that some expressed that they would get holy hearts and be able to live holy lives, he believed that the Holy Ghost was applying the word to their hearts. On one occasion Chief Leflore sent out one of his captains to invite his

people to come and hear the good talk which their white brother had brought them. A large number came, to whom he discoursed for more than an hour, Colonel Leflore acting as interpreter. He then requested the audience to make any inquiry of him that they saw proper. Several important questions were asked and satisfactorily answered. The chief captain expressed great satisfaction that he had been permitted to live until the good talk had been brought to him; said his parents knew nothing about it, but he hoped to learn more of these great truths. The meeting was then concluded by prayer, but before the assembly dispersed Colonel Leflore ordered a herald to call in all the strangers to hear him and the captains, when each in his turn pressed upon them the importance of the truths they had heard and the necessity of changing their way of living and following the teaching of the Good Book, which their Great Father in heaven had sent them to show them the way to holiness and eternal life. On another occasion Dr. Talley attended a council which the chief had called on important public business. It took the council nearly half a day to get organized for business, during which time the missionary asked and answered a great many questions through Colonel Leflore in regard to the truths of the gospel. When the council was organized, the chief requested Dr. Talley to open with prayer to the Great Spirit for his blessing on their deliberations.

The Choctaws have been from time immemorial a very docile and tractable tribe of Indians. Tradition says that they had some bloody wars in the

long ago with other tribes, but they have never been known to take up arms against the white race. Apart from the evils consequent on drunkenness, which they learned from the whites, and some other practices, such as polygamy, which were the result of their almost utter moral darkness, they possessed in an eminent degree what we may call heathen morality. They generally respected each other's private and social rights. Their women were remarkable for female modesty and chastity. In their utter ignorance of the laws of God they were somewhat loose in the perpetuity of their marriage obligations; but while they lived together as husband and wife, they were generally true to each other; and when they separated (as they sometimes did), the women were seldom known to go astray, and when opportunity offered took another husband. Except when under the influence of whisky they lived peaceably together. In the fall and winter months they came down in droves from the Nation and spread themselves all through the white settlements, the men hunting and the women and larger children making cane baskets and picking cotton. The women were remarkable for their industry; but when the men were not hunting, dressing deerskins, or making blowguns, they were generally lounging about their camp fires. They would not steal pigs, corn, or anything else; but if they were hungry, they were not backward in asking for something to eat. They were always pleased to have the white people learn their language, so as to converse with them in their native dialect. Their ideas of moral truth were exceedingly limited. They believed that

there was a Great Being somewhere who had created the visible heavens and earth with all their contents, but they did not know where he lived nor any means by which they could have any communication with him. They believed that good people would go to a place of health, peace, and plenty after death, and that bad people would go to a place of an opposite character. One thing remarkable is that they did not have in their native tongue any words to make what we call a blasphemous oath. Pity that our elevated Christian language could not be thus pruned.

No man ever had more confidence in the inherent power of gospel truth to save the soul than Dr. Talley. He believed that if he could only get the cardinal truths of Christianity fairly before the minds of the Indians God would attend them by the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to make them effectual in the salvation of these children of the forest. He found the more elevated class of Choctaws everywhere anxious for schools, but he did not care to spend much of his time in that direction until he got a fair proportion of them brought into the kingdom of Christ. Dr. Talley was not only a man "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," but he knew how to take advantage of the tide of public feeling in order to secure the great object of his mission.

By the first of July prospects were very encouraging. The chief and most of the headmen were decidedly in favor of the Christianization of the Nation. There was a general inquiry among the people as to what this new doctrine might be. The Doctor determined to take advantage of these evi-

dent workings of the Spirit of truth in the hearts of the people. He suggested to Colonel Leflore the advisability of having a Choctaw camp meeting. The Colonel and most of the leading men of his district favored it. The place selected was about ten miles above the white settlements, a little to the right of the Nashville Trace going north. The plan was to get Messrs. Cooper, Walker, and other leading Methodist families below the line to come up with their wagons and show the Indians how to have camp meeting. The Leflores and several of the captains would also camp. The meeting was appointed to commence on the 15th of August. Dr. Talley immediately wrote for his reserve, Robert D. Smith, to come to the camp meeting prepared to remain in the Nation, and also to Father Isaac Smith to come with him, as he was experienced in preaching through an interpreter, having been a missionary among the Creek Indians. He also wrote to us at Vicksburg to come to his assistance to preach to the white people who would be present. At Clinton we fell in with the Smiths. Just after crossing the line we stopped for dinner and rest at the home of Reuben Harris, the brother-in-law of Colonel Leflore. He was not a professor of religion, but requested Father Smith to baptize his five children, which he proceeded to do. We proceeded to the camp ground. But such a prospect for a camp meeting we had never seen. Dr. Talley's little cloth tent was the only one visible, inside of which he and a stout Indian man sat on the ground enjoying a social smoke of the pipe. A rude triangular pulpit had been framed between three trees,

and a few small logs split in halves had been placed around for seats; no other signs of a camp meeting to be seen. Robert D. Smith erected his tent beside the Doctor's, which made ample room for all the preachers and congregation that night. Dr. Talley told us not to be discouraged by appearances, that the people would begin to come in next morning. Colonel and William Leflore came with their families, also Captains Offa Homa, Washington, and other headmen, and by about ten o'clock we were ready for preaching. Father Smith and Greenwood Leflore stood beside each other ready for the work before them. The Choctaw Indians have the greatest confidence in the opinions and truthfulness of old men. Father Smith first told them that by the invitation of their good brother, Dr. Talley, he had come a long journey to bring the good talk to them, and that they might know from his gray hairs that he would not deceive them. He then preached to them in short paragraphs, each paragraph containing some cardinal doctrine in the plan of salvation. He dwelt particularly on the love of our Great Father above in sending his Son to die for the redemption of his lost children. At the end of each paragraph Colonel Leflore would take that for his text and literally preach a short expository sermon on it. Though not yet a professor of religion, he spoke fluently, eloquently, and feelingly. In accordance with a prevailing fashion he wore a calico morning gown, and his clear, sonorous voice and appropriate and earnest gestures gave him more the appearance of a Methodist preacher than the Chief of a Nation. William Leflore also assisted in the interpretation,

but he had not the fluency and moving eloquence of his brother. Thus the service proceeded from hour to hour during each day. At the second or third service native Indian men and women were weeping all over the congregation. Sitting among these untutored children of the wilderness and seeing the melting and subduing effect of the gospel upon them, it seemed as though eighteen hundred years of the world's history had mysteriously disappeared, and we had been drawn back into the apostolic age, where Paul and his colleagues preached the same gospel so successfully to the wild Scythians and other barbarians of their day. We had just read the first volume of Watson's Institutes, and believed that his arguments in favor of the divine origin and truthfulness of Christianity are unanswerable; but no argument of Watson or any other man was ever so convincing that "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" as the effect it had on these sons and daughters of utter moral darkness. By Saturday night the awakening was so general that Dr. Talley and Father Smith proposed to call the penitents to the altar for prayer and special instruction. This they had to do through their interpreter; but Colonel Leflore had been well prompted, and he did it in Methodist preacher fashion. A large number knelt at the altar. The two Leflores went among the kneeling penitents and talked to them in their own language. We noticed Mrs. William Leflore, a noble-looking woman, weeping as though her heart were utterly dissolved in penitential sorrow. Knowing that she could speak broken English pretty well, we ap-

proached her and began to speak words of comfort and encouragement, when she exclaimed: "O Mr. Jones, my heart is so hard! My heart is so hard! If I could only get clear of this hard heart, then I would have some hope!" How natural was that experience and that exercise in one just passing through the pangs of the new birth! She afterwards became one of the "elect ladies" of the Church. But the most exciting scene at the altar that night was the case of a full-blood woman who fell under the power of the Spirit, an incident common in various States during the first two decades of the present century. When we first noticed the woman, she was lying out at full length, motionless, and apparently dead. Several of her associates were very much alarmed, and commenced shaking her violently as if to make her catch her breath. As our interpreters were engaged elsewhere, we approached the alarmed party—all of whom seemed to be full-blood natives—and made use of a few words of their language, which we had learned, to assure them that the woman was neither dead nor sick, but that her Great Father above had taken her in hand to separate her sins from her and make her good and happy; that they must not touch her, as that would disturb her prayers, but kneel around and pray for her. They at once withdrew their hands and waited near by her with great interest at least an hour, when she commenced breathing visibly and came to happy, a young convert. By the middle of the day on Sabbath the religious interests among the natives had increased immensely. The whole encampment seemed to be pervaded by the Holy Spir-

it, and deep solemnity rested on the mixed multitude. The afternoon service was specially for the Indians, and our feelings prompted us to retire to a thicket near by, that we might spend the time in private prayer for a special blessing on the meeting. "O," we soliloquized, "if Colonel Leflore and his brother, William, could only be truly converted, what a blessing they would be to this Nation! They have both the natural and acquired talents, if they only had the spiritual power!" Presently we heard an unusual commotion in the encampment, accompanied with loud shouts. We hastened back to mingle with the scene. We found the congregation, regardless of race or color, formed in a vast circle, mostly standing outside of the seats. We pressed in toward the center, where we found Dr. Talley running round, rubbing his hands together, exhorting first one and then another, interspersed with loud shouts of holy triumph. "O Brother Jones," said he as he clasped us, "God has given us the victory!" We looked around to see the Leflores and their wives, with a number of the captains and headmen, with many others—both men and women—all bathed in tears as if they were completely subdued to the gospel of Christ, while others were rejoicing in their first love. The interest manifested continued until late Sunday night. After appropriate services on Monday morning, Dr. Talley proposed an experience meeting to give the young native converts an opportunity to tell, in their own way, what great things the Lord had done for them. They spoke in their own language, and Colonel Leflore interpreted for us. Captain Washington said that he was born

and brought up in a dark wilderness where he had no light. After a long time he saw, through the thick undergrowth, a little bright light like a candle. This was when his white brother, Dr. Talley, first brought the good talk to him. He immediately commenced pushing through the bushes and briers to get to that light. He met with a great many difficulties; but the nearer he got the larger the light became, until now he had got entirely out of the wilderness into the clear, broad light of day, and felt very happy. Another headman said that heretofore he had seen his people go down, one after another, into a deep, dark, muddy river and sink out of his sight. They never came back, and he never could learn where they went. Since he had learned the good talk from the missionary whom his Great Father above had sent to his children in the wilderness, he saw what would become of his people after crossing the river of death. If they had been good here, they would go to the home of the good and be happy forever; but if they continued wicked here, they would go among the wicked in the other world and suffer pain and despair without end. He had set out to be good, and he had already got a blessing. Captain Offa Homa (translated into English it is: Offa, dog; Homa, red) said he had long believed that he had two hearts. One was a large, strong heart, always inclined to wickedness, and he had followed that heart most of his life in the way of drinking, quarreling, fighting, etc., though such wicked acts had always been followed by bitter regret and a wish that he had not done so. His other heart was a little, weak heart, but it always inclined

him to good actions, and the few times he had yielded to its promptings he felt much happier; but it was so little and weak that his big, wicked heart had nearly always controlled it. After receiving the good talk, he saw that his big, strong, wicked heart was himself and that his little heart was the true light sent from his Great Father above to lead him away from his wicked practices that he might be saved from sin and from hell. What he supposed was his big, strong, and wicked heart was now all gone, and the new heart that had been given him was full of peace, love, and joy. The woman who had fallen under the power of the Spirit on Saturday night said that when Father Smith told them how bad their hearts were she kept thinking about her own heart until it seemed to her to be just as bad as it could be; and when they were invited to get down on their knees to be prayed for, she got on her knees in a hurry, for she felt that she wanted all the good people to pray for her. As soon as she got on her knees her bad heart began to grow until it filled her whole breast, and then it turned to a stone and stopped her breath, so that she had no strength left, and fell over like a dead person; and then, as she lay helpless on the ground, she began to pray inside of her with all her might to her Father above in the name of his Son to take away her heart of stone and give her a heart of flesh. Very soon her big heart of stone began to melt like a snowball before the fire, until it was all gone, and her breath came again and she was soon able to get up and talk. And when she got up, she felt as though she could fly like a bird. She was very happy then and

was still very happy, and would love to see everybody as happy as herself.

These are only specimens of the manner in which these children of the wilderness expressed their religious feelings and the processes of experience by which they were brought to Christ. Dr. Talley and his colleagues held a number of camp meetings after this in the Nation before its removal to the West, and some of them were attended with the extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit. The "falling exercise," as it is usually called, was just as common and well marked among the Indians as it was from 1800 to 1804 in the great revivals in Kentucky and Tennessee and many other parts of the United States. Whatever causes led to this sudden and deathlike suspension of the vital functions, it was not voluntary or feigned on the part of its subjects, and was always attended with great awakenings and well-marked conversions. Our theory on the subject may not be satisfactory to others, but it is so to ourself. "Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles," not to destroy or even suspend the free agency of men in working out their salvation or to bring about a forced conversion to Christianity, but to attract their fixed attention to the subject, convince them of this truth, and lead them to seek a saving interest in it in God's appointed way. So these extraordinary physical exercises of having the jerks, dancing, and falling helpless were caused by the Spirit of God, not to force people into religion, but to attract public attention to the subject, arouse sinners from the deep and dangerous sleep of sin, and bring them to feel the importance of

seeking a personal interest in Christ. Two other public meetings were held in the immediate vicinity during this camp meeting, one being a temperance convention and the other a ball play.

Colonel Leflore had become deeply impressed with the ruin that the introduction of whisky into his district was bringing upon his people. Having no prisons and no way to levy and collect fines, they had to resort to more primitive remedies for the arrest of crime and the punishment of evil doers. Sometime before they had held a public meeting on the subject and, by a majority vote, passed an ordinance to exclude the traffic in whisky from the district, and affixed as a penalty that any one violating the ordinance should be struck a hard lick on the head with a stick and have his whisky poured out on the ground. A minority were opposed to the law, and among them was Captain Offa Homa (Red Dog). He was a very athletic man, self-willed and brave. He determined to carry on the traffic at all hazards, and procured a supply of whisky. Some of his men called on him, hit him a tremendous lick on the back of his head (cutting a gash two inches long, which had not entirely healed up when he came to camp meeting), and then poured his stock of whisky on the ground. Colonel Leflore and his councilors thought it best to call another convention to ratify the ordinance and make its authority supreme. The convention was called to meet a few hundred yards from the camp ground, and all the ministers and other visitors invited to be present. Heralds were sent round to apprise all of the time and place. While the assembly was collecting, one

man kindled a fire for the double purpose of crisping sumach leaves to mix with the tobacco and lighting the pipe of peace; another spread a blanket on the ground, substituted a pine knot for a block, and commenced cutting up the tobacco; and a third pulverized the sumach leaves and mixed them in equal quantities with the tobacco. In the meantime the subordinate officers, under the eye of the Chief, attended to the seating of the audience on the ground in a circle around the fire and blanket, the men forming the center and the women and children the periphery. Then two young men, assisted by the three already mentioned in the way of filling and lighting the pipes, waited on the men in detail, each one taking three or four whiffs. The ministers sat on the ground in the center of the circle; and when the Indians were done smoking, the pipe was refilled and brought to us, and we took a few whiffs with our red brethren as a token of peace and good will. The pipe of peace having passed round to all entitled to smoke, the speaking commenced. A low, thick-set, full-blood Indian made the opening speech. He stood erect, made but few gestures, and spoke deliberately, emphatically, and in a full, round tone of voice. Greenwood Leflore followed in a very fluent and eloquent speech. He shrugged his shoulders and gesticulated like a Frenchman. We noticed one peculiarity in the public speaking of the Indians, which was that they raised the voice on the final word of every sentence, as we do in asking a question. The audience frequently uttered a response during the speaking, which was equivalent to saying "Very good" or "We approve." After some fur-

ther deliberation the former ordinance was confirmed, and whisky banished from the district, which was doubtless greatly to the advantage of the mission as well as to the Nation. The convention ended, and the audience returned to the camp ground. The ball play was patronized by the young men and larger boys, who generally had one on all great occasions, and came to such places prepared for it. They selected an open, flat ridge, with few obstructions on the ground. They set two pairs of poles about twenty-five feet long in the ground, with their bases together and their tops about eight feet apart. The set of poles were about one hundred and fifty feet apart. Each player was provided with a bat in each hand, about three feet long, made of hickory, in order to have it small and light, with the outer end curved and, by the use of deer sinews, formed into a little basket just large enough to hold the ball. They then divided into two equal companies. Each company was assigned to one set of poles; then the ball was tossed up so as to fall on the middle ground, and the scramble for its possession commenced. It was unlawful to kick it with the foot or strike it with the hand to keep another from getting it; only the bats were to be used in picking up or tossing the ball. While seeking the ball they might get in each other's way or turn each other's bats aside with their own, but as soon as one got the ball it was unlawful to interfere with him until he made his throw. As soon as one saw that he had the ball he would step out of the crowd, with both bats covering the ball, and, with a swing to give it velocity, make his throw toward the poles of his

company. If the ball passed outside the poles, it was a tally against his company; if between them, it was a tally in their favor. As soon as the throw was made the contest for the possession of the ball was renewed. If one of the same company picked it up, he wheeled round and threw it at his poles; if one of the opposite company got it, he would run to the middle ground and make his throw. Until they had beaten the grass down by running over the ground so often, they sometimes had to spend considerable time turning it with their bats before they could find the ball; but as soon as found, they knew it by the finder's running to a suitable place to make his throw. The scene became immensely exciting. The players seemed to have the dexterity of monkeys. The wonder to us was that they did not cripple each other; yet not the least casualty occurred. They generally continued their play, without any unpleasant altercations, until by mutual consent they came to a close, when the tally was counted and the victors announced.

The mission in New Orleans was encouragingly prosperous this year. Mr. Curtis, the missionary, reported to the editors of the *Methodist Magazine* April 8, 1828, that the members had renewed their covenant with God; that they were deeply engaged for a revival of religion; that they manifested unusual solicitude for the salvation of sinners; that at an evening prayer meeting lately five interesting young men, after an earnest struggle in prayer, were powerfully converted; that a small number had been enabled to testify that the "blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed them from all sin," and that

others were earnestly seeking the same state of grace.

The Mobile Mission, under the labors of Thomas Burpo, was steadily advancing. There was such an increase in the congregation as made it necessary several times to enlarge the seating accommodations. At present the enlargement was made by the addition of galleries above the main audience room. In the Alabama part of the Conference the work was, in many of the circuits, very prosperous. With such local preachers and such a working membership as they had in many places, it could not be otherwise. Methodism in Western Louisiana was extending more rapidly than ever before. The statistics show that we had a net increase in the Conference this year of eight hundred and thirty white, two hundred and ninety-three colored, and four hundred Indian members, giving us an aggregate increase of fifteen hundred and twenty-three. We felt that we had good cause to "thank God and take courage."

CHAPTER VII.

1829.

THE time was near at hand for our scattered hosts to assemble at our annual convocation, which was to meet in Tuscaloosa, Ala., on Christmas day, 1828. The Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Alabama preachers were arranging their plans to meet their traveling companions at designated points, to take their usual horseback journey, of from fifty to four hundred miles, in the dead of winter, to the appointed place of holding our Annual Conference. To avoid the difficulties of traveling through the Wilderness, as we still sometimes called the Choctaw country, the western preachers had generally entered Alabama by going through the sparse white settlements south of the Indian country; but now the Choctaw Nation was a part of the Conference territory, and a good company from the Mississippi Valley determined to reach Tuscaloosa by way of the Robinson Road, through the Choctaw Nation to Columbus.

When the original Mississippi Territory was divided into the Mississippi and Alabama Territories, the settlements on the Tombigbee, in Lowndes and Monroe Counties, fell to Mississippi. They were cut off from all the counties south of the Choctaw Nation by the territory of that Nation. When the capital of Mississippi was ultimately fixed at Jackson,

and the Indian territory had been reduced by the late Purchase to a width of about one hundred and twenty miles, the government determined to open a public highway on the most direct route from the State capital to Columbus, in order to connect those isolated counties with the body of the State. Mr. Raymond Robinson, of Hinds County, who built the first house in the town of Raymond and gave it his Christian name, was employed to survey and make the road, which took his name. It left the old Natchez and Nashville Trace in the northeastern corner of Madison County and passed diagonally across what is now Leake, Winston, and Oktibbeha Counties, until it intersected, near Columbus, the military road leading from Florence, on the Tennessee River, to New Orleans. The Robinson Road soon became one of the most important roads in Mississippi, not only as a connecting link between those remote counties and the body of the State, but as a convenience to travelers in general, and especially to emigrants moving from the east to the New Purchase. We reached Columbus on Saturday, and remained there until Monday morning. Several of our company preached during our stay. Columbus was still an unpretending wooden town.

The rise and progress of Methodism in Columbus was very much like its history in all newly settled countries. The pioneer Methodist preachers have never been governed by water courses, State or county lines in the formation of their circuits. Their policy has been to tread closely on the heels of emigration and preach to the new settlers wherever found. It is thought by some that Robert Paine

(now, 1875, our senior bishop) was the first itinerant that preached in the vicinity of Columbus. He does not, however, claim that honor, but awards it to his early colaborer, Ebenezer Hearn. At the Tennessee Conference held in Nashville October 1, 1818, Mr. Hearn was appointed to a circuit in the upper valley of the Tombigbee called Buttahachie, and during the year extended his labors to Columbus; and, so far as we are able to judge, was the pioneer preacher in that region of country. The following year (1820) he was continued on at least a part of the same work, though the name was changed to Marion. Columbus was included for many years in Marion Circuit, and frequently had only week-day preaching. The first Methodist Church was organized there in 1823 by Wiley Ledbetter, and consisted of Alexander Gray and his wife, Major William Dowsing and his wife, and four or five others. Mr. Gray was class leader, but was always assisted in the social meetings of the Church by Major Dowsing. The only place of public worship for many years was a small frame school-house in the outskirts of the village, on a lot of land now occupied by Franklin Academy. At first they had no pulpit, the preacher standing at the back of a chair; the seats were made of two split rails with the thin edges placed together. This house was occupied as a union place of worship for all denominations. At the time of our visit (December 21, 1828) they had comfortable plank seats and a plain pulpit, though the little house was still out in the woods. We had little acquaintance with any of the first Methodists in or about Colum-

bus except the family of Major William Dowsing. He was both in person and by grace a first-class man. He had religion, and knew he had it. He referred with great interest to the fact of a clear and powerful conversion at the beginning of his religious life. He was gifted in prayer, and often spoke with great feeling in class meetings and love feasts; but his great excellence was in singing. He had a fine musical voice, and entered heartily and feelingly into the sentiments of our good old hymns and choruses. To hear him when his heart was warm sing in the tune then generally used the hymn commencing "And let this feeble body fail," was enough to arouse all the heavenly aspirations of every pious soul in the house. Early Methodism in Columbus owed a great deal to the energy, liberality, and untiring perseverance of Major Dowsing and his excellent family. The hospitalities of his house were known and enjoyed by all the preachers in charge of Columbus to the time of his death.

The weather had been rainy, the roads were muddy, and the water courses high. Between Columbus and Tuscaloosa we had a time not soon to be forgotten in crossing the streams and bottom lands of Luxapelilah, Cold Fire, Lubbub, and Sipsey. But it was a part of our Conference holiday, and we took the mud and water as we found them, plunging in with a vim. If the mud in many places had any bottom, it was hard to find. We recollect one bottom that had a causeway a mile long, made of split puncheons laid down loosely. Many of them had been displaced by frequent crossing, so that our horses' feet would frequently go between them, en-

dangering both man and horse. To make bad worse, the water was over the puncheons, so that we could not see the openings. Most of us thought that the weather was too cold to justify wading, so we concluded to take all risks and plunge ahead. Brother Winans was of a different opinion. He prudently thought that if he got wet he could get dry again, and that if he got chilled he could get warm again; but that if he got one of his or his horse's bones broken, it might not be so easily mended; so he dismounted and led his horse, in many places wading knee-deep in water. His appearance as he measured off that mile of inundated causeway was ludicrous. He wore a large plaid cloak with broad stripes, the prevailing color of which was green; he had on a broad-brimmed white beaver hat that had become so limp in the wet weather that it fell over his eyes, to avoid which he turned it straight up in front. By the good providence of God we all got through safe. Conference opened on Christmas day, 1828, with Bishop Soule in the chair. William Winans was again elected Secretary. A fair proportion of the members were present from each of the three States. The Conference was promptly called to order by Bishop Soule, and opened with the usual religious services. After fixing the hours of meeting and adjournment and appointing the usual standing committees, with attention to some other preliminary matters, the Conference graciously passed a resolution that "the preachers on trial be permitted to sit in the Conference room during this session." What condescension! There were the "preachers on trial" expecting, after a short probation, to become

members of the Conference, and anxious to learn all that they could about their coming responsibilities and Conference duties, and yet they could not be permitted to take a back seat and witness the deliberations of their elder brethren without a formal resolution conferring the privilege as a special favor. In those days but few of our people attended our annual sessions except to hear the bishop and other leading ministers preach; but since we have adopted the plan of sitting with open doors no ecclesiastical convocations in the land attract such vast assemblages as our Annual Conferences. In a few cases it may be prudent to sit with closed doors; but as a general rule we wish the members and patrons of our Church to see and hear all that we say and do in our Conferences of every grade.

Under the first question, Benjamin F. Coxe, Francis A. McWilliams, Daniel D. Brewer, Andrew Adams, Thomas Lynch, Richard Pipkin, Joshua Peavy, Preston Cooper, John Bilbo, Nathan Hopkins, David Harkey, Eugene V. Levert, Felix Wood, and Benjamin B. Smith (fourteen) were admitted on trial. John W. Mann, Anderson C. McDaniel, and William Leggatt were discontinued; John Matthews, Samuel Walker, Robert D. Smith, William C. Gayle, John A. Cotton, Daniel H. Norwood, and Blanton P. Box were continued on trial; William H. Turnley, Moses Perry, James A. Hughes, and Lewis S. Turner were received into full connection and elected to deacon's orders; John G. Jones, John P. Haney, William Spruill, Isaac V. Enochs, Thomas Burpo, Henry J. Brown, John O. T. Hawkins,

and William V. Douglass were elected to elder's orders, and all ordained except Mr. Hawkins, who was not at Conference. John Cotton was readmitted; and our Journal states that Henry Stephenson (late of the Missouri Conference) was also readmitted in deacon's orders; but he ought to have been placed with those admitted on trial, as it does not appear that he had been previously received into full connection. In 1817 he had settled as a local preacher in Hempstead County, Ark., and in 1820 took itinerant work under William Stephenson, who was then presiding elder of Black River District of the Missouri Conference, which embraced the settled portions of Southeastern Arkansas. In September of that year he was admitted on trial into the Missouri Conference, and in 1821 traveled Hot Springs Circuit; but having a large family to provide for by his personal attention and labor, at the end of the year he was discontinued at his own request. A few years subsequently, though not a slaveholder himself, yet, to avoid the troubles growing out of the "Jesse Hale storm" against Methodists who were connected with the institution, he left Hempstead County, Ark., with a number of Methodist families, and settled in the northeastern part of Natchitoches Parish, La. Benjamin A. Haughton and Ashley Hewitt were placed on the supernumerary list, and William Spruill, Thomas Owens, and Thomas S. Abernathy were superannuated; John O. T. Hawkins and Thomas E. Ledbetter were located at their own request; Jacob Whetstone, Jacob Segrest, Thomas Ford, Person B. Griffin, and David Harkey were elected deacons as local preachers, and Richardson

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Owen and Charles Gwinn were elected elders in the same relation.

Where persons are recommended to our Annual Conferences, either for admission or election to orders, and we see from the representation that we cannot consistently and safely admit or elect them, and that to vote on their cases would result in their rejection, we permit the presiding elder who brings their recommendation to withdraw it. This is, we think, the better way. We find one or two cases of this sort recorded on the Journal of our present Conference. Those who had resolved three years before "that we will not elect to elder's orders any member of our body who shall marry within four years of the time of his admission on trial until four years after he was ordained deacon," finding themselves in a hopeless minority, moved the repeal of that resolution, which was carried. Since that time the Conference has permitted the single preachers to exercise their own discretion as to the time of forming their matrimonial alliances.

Encouraging reports were received from the Boards of Trustees of Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss., and of Simms Female Academy, at Tuscaloosa, Ala., and committees appointed to respond expressing our satisfaction with the success of those Conference seminaries. Four additional trustees were added to the Board of the Simms Academy in the persons of Dr. Jack Shackelford, Moses Andrew, Daniel Hargrove, and Hon. H. W. Collier, and a committee of three, consisting of the presiding elder of the Cahawba District, the preacher in charge of Tuscaloosa Station, and Wil-

liam Spruill, was appointed to wait on Mr. Simms as early as possible and receive from him a legal conveyance of the Academy property to the Board of Trustees.

While on the subject of education, we will remark that the plan of the Tennessee and Mississippi Conferences of uniting in the establishment of a college of high grade, and which had been temporarily suspended, had been revived by the Tennessee Conference, and Rev. William McMahan sent as a delegate to the Mississippi Conference to request coöperation. Mr. McMahan appeared before the Conference, and read an extract from the Journal of the Tennessee Conference, with other documents, setting forth the action of that Conference on the subject of the contemplated colleges. He also stated that they had received a subscription of ten thousand dollars, with a lot of land for a college campus, from the citizens at La Grange, in Franklin County, North Alabama, upon condition that the college should be located there; that his Conference had unanimously accepted the offer, made the location accordingly, and now asked concurrence. After due deliberation the Conference accepted the offer, pledged hearty coöperation, and appointed seven commissioners, consisting of Robert L. Kennon, Joseph McDowell, Alexander Talley, Thomas E. Ledbetter, Ebenezer Hearn, Thomas Owens, and William Spruill, to meet a like commission from the Tennessee Conference at La Grange for the purpose of founding the college. The college, founded in 1830, had a successful career until its buildings were burned by the Federal army when it gained possession of North Alabama.

A communication was received from Mrs. Caroline Matilda Thayer, Corresponding Secretary of the Female Assistance Society at Washington, Miss., covering a donation to the funds of the Conference of three hundred and thirty-seven dollars and sixty-eight and three-fourths cents, which was gratefully acknowledged in a communication to the kind donors. Similar societies at Mount Hermon, Pinckneyville, and Tuscaloosa sent smaller donations to the Conference fund, all of which were appropriately acknowledged. Our Choctaw Mission had been so signally blessed by the Supreme Head of the Church that it begat a spirit of extra liberality in various places for its support. Several missionary societies were organized for the express purpose of contributing to its funds.

Our delegates to the late General Conference were more fortunate financially than many of their successors have been. After defraying all their expenses they had a surplus of ninety-one dollars and eighty-seven and a half cents, which was turned over to our Conference fund. After all these little rivulets had been turned into the Conference fund, the stewards' report shows that the deficient claimants were paid at the rate of only fifty-six dollars and forty-three and three-fourths cents on the one hundred dollars.

John Collier, who was readmitted a year ago, persistently neglected to go to the circuit assigned him, for which he was deprived of his official standing and reduced to the relation of a private member. He afterwards became a member and minister in the Baptist Church, but did not make much impression

as a preacher. As a general rule, where persons do not succeed as members or ministers of our Church, they do not succeed elsewhere, their lives are thrown away, and their usefulness is forfeited by their instability.

The case of Peyton S. Greaves, which had been referred by our last Conference to the presiding elder of the district in which his appointment might be made, came up at this Conference for final adjudication, and he was expelled. If Mr. Greaves had not given way to a hasty, fault-finding spirit and treated the authorities of the Church contumaciously, there would have been no necessity for his expulsion. A few months after the Conference he undertook to vindicate himself in the columns of a secular paper, in which he charged William Winans with duplicity, and otherwise reflected on the men and measures of the Church. This drew from Mr. Winans a reply and a vindication of the Church administration through the same channel, written in a true Christian spirit and expressed in tender, affectionate language. In the meantime Mr. Greaves, who had settled somewhere in Alabama, had imbibed a very unbrotherly spirit toward Ebenezer Hearn, the presiding elder of the Alabama District, and repeatedly asserted that Mr. Hearn was neglecting his official duties, living at ease at home, spending his time in building a fine house, while he was receiving money enough from the Church to become rich. Mr. Greaves had put himself into several complications, and had determined to make his way out by leaving the Church and uniting with the Methodist Protestant Church, which determination he

soon accomplished without waiting to defend himself before the Conference. The charges brought against him were fraud and falsehood. The charge of fraud was brought against him by William Winans, and was that Mr. Greaves, at the last Conference, claimed from the Conference fund, to make up a deficiency in his salary while in New Orleans, the sum of forty-three dollars and sixty-four cents, whereas the account current kept by the stewards of the New Orleans Station showed that he had been overpaid eighty-seven dollars and thirty-eight cents. The only testimony in support of this charge and specification was from the Conference stewards, and an official transcript from the stewards' book of the New Orleans Station. The charge of falsehood was brought by Robert L. Kennon and James H. Mellard. The first specification was what Mr. Greaves had repeatedly said against Ebenezer Hearn, and the second specification was his having repeatedly accused William Winans of duplicity in having (in 1827) promised the New Orleans Station for 1828 both to himself (Greaves) and William M. Curtis. Pending the first specification the preachers from Mr. Hearn's district all testified that he had been diligent in the discharge of his duties as presiding elder, and that he was not receiving from his district as much in the way of salary as the Discipline allowed him. Under the second specification Mr. Winans testified that he had not promised the New Orleans Station either to Mr. Greaves or Mr. Curtis; and Mr. Curtis, who was present, testified that Mr. Winans had never made any such promise to him. Mr. Greaves, who in an evil hour had determined to

throw off any further personal attempt to explain his conduct or defend himself before the Conference, and had already completed his arrangements to unite with the Methodist Protestant Church, did not appear at Conference, either in person or by his next friend, though his accusers had given him due and timely notice of the charges and specifications. Mr. Greaves left the Conference no other alternative but to find him guilty as charged and expel him from the Church. This was a sad day to the Conference. We deplored the loss under such circumstances of such a man as Peyton S. Greaves had once promised to become. He soon appeared as a prominent minister in the Methodist Protestant Church, and was several times elected President of that Conference. In November, 1857, he appeared at the session of our Conference, held in Brandon, as an applicant for readmission among us. He seemed to be in a Christian spirit, but it was ascertained that one or two of his colleagues of thirty years before would oppose his readmission, and the application was not made.

Dr. Alexander Talley brought several of his native Choctaw converts to Conference, accompanied by a good interpreter. After he had read a very encouraging report of the mission, which was ordered to be forwarded to the editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*, at New York, for publication, the Conference, by resolution, requested that one of the native Choctaws address the Conference, through the interpreter, in relation to his views of the importance and success of the mission. That most excellent man and Christian, Cap-

tain Washington, was appointed to deliver the address, which he did in a very dignified, clear, and feeling manner. At the conclusion of the address Bishop Soule arose and requested the interpreter to give him a formal introduction to Captain Washington, that he might give him the right hand of fellowship, and through him the whole Choctaw Nation, bidding them welcome to the bosom of the Church and to the hope of heaven. The ceremony was performed in the most cordial and affectionate style. Bishop Soule then returned to his chair full of emotion, and referred to the discouragements under which, a year ago, we had determined to revive our suspended Choctaw Mission, and to the extraordinary success with which the enterprise had been favored, concluding his remarks with these words: "Brethren, the Choctaw Nation is ours! No! I mistake! The Choctaw Nation is Jesus Christ's!" It is impossible to convey to the minds of those who had no personal knowledge of Bishop Soule the emphasis, power, and feeling with which he uttered these words. His eyes sparkled with the fullness of joy that overflowed his soul, while his voice trembled with emotion. The Conference was in full sympathy with the Bishop.

It was on the Sabbath embraced in this Conference that Bishop Soule preached a most complete and powerful sermon on the united divinity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. His text was John i. 14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." It is barely possible to give even an intel-

ligent synopsis of that grand and glorious sermon. His introduction was made from the context, in which he gave us the import of the leading terms as found in the original languages, quoting both Greek and Hebrew as readily as a well-instructed classical scholar. He then combated successfully the leading errors of the Unitarians; gave us the scriptural view of the united divinity and humanity of the Son of God, showing that, while "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" but the name of Jesus Christ, we needed no other Saviour, as "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them;" then followed an exhortation, full of Christian sympathy and spiritual power, to the vast assembly to fly to this Almighty Saviour and commit the keeping of their souls to his all-sufficiency. O, it was indeed "joy unspeakable and full of glory" to hear, believe, and feel that sermon! To this day we delight to call it up from the long ago and reflect upon it in connection with the sublime, ecstatic joy we felt at the time of its delivery.

The present session was harmonious. The various interests of the Church had multiplied, requiring continued deliberations until noon of the ninth day. At 11 A.M. on Friday, January 2, 1829, the Bishop delivered his parting address and read the appointments. The horses were hitched around the church, and the preachers entered it with traveling suits on. As soon as the appointments were announced and the benediction pronounced, they scattered to all points of the compass. We instant-

ly re-formed our westward-bound company, determining to spend the coming Sabbath in Columbus, so as to enter the Choctaw Nation early on Monday morning. O those terrible Sipsey, Cold Fire, and Lubbug swamps! We wish some person would tell what sort of a road they now have from Tuscaloosa to Columbus. Our company consisted of William Winans, William M. Curtis, Thomas Griffin, William V. Douglass, and John G. Jones. When about midway of the Nation, at dinner time, we stopped at an Indian hut and succeeded in buying, at a high price, a peck of sweet potatoes. Thomas Griffin volunteered as company cook, and, shoveling the fire from the center of the fireplace, poured the potatoes on the heated hearth and replaced the fire on top. In a short time we had a peck of well-roasted potatoes to feed five hungry and travel-worn Methodist preachers. We have been peculiarly unfortunate in our attempts to collect names, dates, and facts connected with the origin and early progress of Methodism in Tuscaloosa. Either the matter has been deferred too long or we have not, by correspondence, been able to find persons who can give the desired information. The Alabama preachers should appoint a competent historian to write a history of their Conferences, who will succeed in saving much valuable material in great danger of being lost irrecoverably by delay. Methodism in Alabama has a history, rich in incident and triumph, that ought to be published in a permanent form for the edification of coming generations.

There are a few well-authenticated facts connected with the rise and progress of our Church in Tus-

caloosa. Tuscaloosa is the Indian name of Black Warrior—*Tusca*, warrior, and *loosa*, black. As soon as the Black Warrior Valley was open to the whites, large numbers were attracted thither by the fertile lands. The falls in the river opposite Tuscaloosa, being considered the head of navigation, suggested the place as a good location for a future city. At an early day it was made the capital of the State, and continued such up to the date of our last Mississippi Conference held there. Such a country, with such prospects in the coming future, would not be overlooked by the pioneer itinerants. Hence as early as October, 1818, the Tennessee Conference, then sitting in Nashville, sent Rev. John Kesterson to a circuit called Tuscaloosa. In 1821, as that region of country belonged to the Mississippi Conference, a new district was formed, called Cahawba, which included Tuscaloosa Circuit, Thomas Nixon being the presiding elder. Both in the General Minutes and written journal Tuscaloosa Circuit is left blank for this year. Whether Presiding Elder Nixon secured the services of a supply or not cannot now be determined. After this date the circuit was generally supplied with two effective preachers. In December, 1824, the town of Tuscaloosa was made a station, with William M. Curtis in charge. The next year Joshua Boucher, Jr., was the preacher; in 1827 William Spruill, who was continued there in 1828; in 1829 (the year of which we are now writing) Robert L. Kennon was the pastor. In 1819, when Tuscaloosa had taken on the form of a town, three local preachers—Dr. Robert L. Kennon, S. M. Meek, and John Owen—settled there, from which

time the inhabitants were well supplied with regular preaching, and from then Tuscaloosa has justly been considered the headquarters of Methodism in that scope of country.

Some few changes were made this year in the older portions of the work, and a few new charges were planned. Claiborne Parish having been formed in Northwestern Louisiana, the former Natchitoches Circuit, which was mainly in the new parish, took the name of Claiborne, with Henry Stephenson in charge. The name of Lake Providence was dropped and a new circuit projected, called Lake St. Joseph, which was intended to embrace all the principal settlements on the western bank of the Mississippi River and adjacent bayous, from the line of Arkansas as far south as the preacher might be able to go. This new work was supplied by removing Samuel Walker, the junior preacher on Bayou Pierre Circuit, to it. The country appointments were detached from Washington and called Adams Circuit, with Miles Harper in charge. Benjamin M. Drake, who had succeeded John C. Burruss in the presidency of the Elizabeth Female Academy, was stationed in Washington. Mr. Burruss had lost his excellent wife, who had been the leading intellectual and religious worker in the Academy, and he requested to be released from the presidency and also to be left without an appointment the present year. The lands, unsurpassed for fertility, on Bayou La Fourche, in the southeastern part of Western Louisiana, were being rapidly settled by an English-speaking population, and a new circuit was projected in that region called La Fourche, but for the want

of a preacher it had to be left on the unsupplied list this year. It was included in the Washington District. Another new circuit was formed in the Cahawba District, composed mostly of territory which had previously belonged to adjacent circuits, and called Oakmulgee. It included that portion of Perry County which lay east of the Cahawba River, and took its name from a large creek which enters the Cahawba River on the eastern side, about twelve miles north of the town of Cahawba. Benjamin A. Houghton and Daniel Norwood were the preachers for this year.

The Choctaw Mission now began to assume the proportions of a regular presiding elder's district. Dr. Talley was continued general superintendent and preacher in charge of Yazoo Circuit. Robert D. Smith was appointed to the head waters of Pearl River, which was the name of his circuit, and Moses Perry to Old Queen's School; white Sineasha School was left to be supplied.

One of the most interesting and trustworthy men admitted at the late Conference was Eugene Verdo Le Vert. Mr. Le Vert must have felt a strong conviction that he was called of God to the itinerant work, or he would not have persisted in his efforts to be a traveling preacher in the face of so many discouragements. He ultimately rose above them all; and after having been on the itinerant roll (including three probations before being received into full connection) more than fifty years, he still lives (January, 1875),* one of the most beloved and hon-

*Since deceased.

ored members of the Alabama Conference. Claude Le Vert, his father, was a Frenchman, and came from France as a surgeon in the fleet of our gallant ally, Count De Rochambeau, during the Revolutionary War. By the time his term of service had expired he had become so pleased with the country that he determined to make his home here; and having married Miss Ann Lea Metcalf, an English lady, he settled in King William County, Va. His wife was an English Episcopalian; and as her husband died when Eugene was quite young, his early religious training depended mainly on her. Eugene V Le Vert was born in King William County, Va., October 20, 1795, and at the age of twenty-three he came into North Alabama. At this time the Methodist Church in the valley of the Tennessee River was all aflame with a revival. Mr. Le Vert was soon brought under serious concern for his personal salvation; and on the 4th of July, 1819, he was admitted into the Church on probation by Rev. James C. Sharp, formerly of the South Carolina Conference, but now in a local relation. On the 14th of the following September he was converted on Jordan's Camp Ground, a few miles west of Huntsville. He was duly recommended and admitted on trial December 10, 1821. He traveled two years with acceptability and usefulness; but, with two other promising young men of the same age in the ministry, married before he was received into full connection. A majority of the Conference, having determined to discourage the early marriage of preachers, dropped them from the itinerant roll at the end of their second year. Nothing unchristian or even imprudent,

in connection with their marriage, was alleged against them except that, in the judgment of the Conference, they married too young. Mr. Le Vert remained local two years and again entered the Conference, and after traveling two additional years again retired, at his own request, to the local ranks. But his spirit was not at rest. He felt that his providential destiny was in the traveling connection, and as soon as he could adjust his domestic business he applied for admission on trial the third time, and on the 29th of December, 1828, he was gladly readmitted, no more to go out until his transfer to the Church triumphant. Of the fifty-four years he has been in the ministry, he has been local three, on circuits and stations twenty-eight, presiding elder eighteen, Sabbath School Agent one, and superannuated four. He has been six years on the supernumerary list, but each year received his appointment and endeavored to do the work assigned him. He is now in his eightieth year, and is really superannuated; but when his brethren gave him that relation four years ago, a friend wrote that he was grieved, feeling the laudable ambition of all such men "to cease at once to work and live." The Church ought to have a place for all veterans to work until they receive their final discharge from the harvest fields of earth. Mr. Le Vert took a high stand in the ministry, and through his long career has retained the confidence and love of his collaborators. He has represented his Conference in the General Conference. As a merited compliment for his thoroughness as a theologian he received, many years ago, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. In

person, Mr. Le Vert was spare, lithe, and active, and capable of great endurance. His voice was clear and his articulation very distinct. His sermons were addressed both to the head and heart. His points were well taken and so clearly presented as to produce conviction in the minds of all who admitted the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures. He has been a good administrative officer. He still writes a very legible hand, and his memory is very tenacious of early names, dates, and facts, as a letter lately received from him abundantly proves. His residence is at Marion, Perry County, Ala., where he lives, greatly respected and beloved by those who know him best, and where he is patiently waiting the Master's call to go from the labors and sufferings of earth to the rest of the saints in heaven. We pray that he may live in peace and comfort until the work of grace is completed and he receives the welcome invitation, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Preston Cooper was another very interesting young preacher who was admitted on trial at this Conference. He was born in Warren County, Tenn., December 29, 1806. His father died when he was a lad, and his mother married again. When Preston had attained to manhood, he quietly left home, determined to be the future architect of his own fortune and fame, and came down into South Alabama, and was careful to say but little about his relatives or former home. He was a close student, and soon became qualified to teach a country school. He made an engagement to teach in a Baptist church in the Flat Woods, in the western part of Marengo County,

where we became acquainted with him in the summer of 1827, when we were on Marengo Circuit, and had the joy of numbering him with our spiritual children. Several members and patrons of our Church had settled in the Flat Woods and invited us to preach in their private residences, which we did regularly during the year. Some one in the neighborhood of White Hall requested us to deliver a letter to Mr. Cooper on our way to our appointment at Mr. Murphy's. As we thought it likely, from the fact that Mr. Cooper was teaching in the Baptist church, that he sympathized with them in their opposition to the Methodists, we had determined to hand him the letter and pass on without letting him know anything about our calling; but when he stepped to the door, there was so much cordial politeness in his manners and so much affability in his countenance that we changed our purpose and reined up our horse for a brief conversation. It was soon understood that we were both far away from our home and all our kindred, he for the purpose of seeking a fortune and we for the purpose of preaching the gospel to strangers. There was evidently a kindred feeling between us and a desire to perpetuate our acquaintance. We informed Mr. Cooper that we had established a regular appointment for preaching at Mr. Young's, near by, and would be glad to have him as one of our auditors. He assured us that he would do himself the pleasure of being at our next appointment. Mr. Cooper had received very little doctrinal religious training in early life; for while the religious element seemed to be predominant in his nature, he was total-

ly at sea on doctrinal points. He had heard so much about unconditional election and reprobation from all eternity that he concluded that if that were the true doctrine it was useless for him to make any effort to get to heaven, as his case was unalterably fixed by a decree of the unchangeable God. Mark tells us that when Jesus beheld a certain young man "he loved him." Had we that feeling in our humble measure when we first looked on Preston Cooper? Surely the hand of God was in this thing! True to his promise, he was at our next appointment at Mr. Young's. Without knowing anything of the perplexed state of his mind on doctrinal points, we preached that day on the love of God to a lost world as manifested in the universality of the great atonement. We supported our positions by plain quotations from the Holy Scriptures. Mr. Cooper was charmed with the doctrine. He felt that in his case the darkness was now passed and the true light had dawned upon him, and he at once became an earnest seeker of personal salvation. Soon after he promptly joined the Church as a seeker of religion. Thinking he might be somewhat unsettled as to the mode of baptism, we immediately placed in his hands the little tract entitled "Two Letters on Baptism to a Friend," by Timothy Merritt, and in a short time he was an applicant for baptism by pouring. One of the striking characteristics of Mr. Cooper's life was unbending firmness in doing what he believed to be duty. His mind was settled to become a scriptural Christian, and all his movements were now in that direction. Being anxious to see him soundly converted, we said

to him that we were going to commence a camp meeting at Glover's on the 27th of September, and would be glad to have him attend. He remarked that he would be an entire stranger there, except a very short acquaintance with some of the preachers, and that he would not know how to dispose of himself at a camp meeting. We requested him to report to us on his arrival, and we would see that he was provided for. Early on the first day of the meeting he was present. We had his horse sent to a good pasture, and introduced him into a good tent for a temporary home. He now seemed to feel that he had nothing to do but to seek religion, and engaged in it with all his heart. At the first call he came to the altar and was powerfully converted. Resting on his knees, the tears of joy running down in a stream, and his countenance all aglow with the love and peace that now reigned within, he gave us a real, spontaneous shout of holy joy and triumph. "Yes, I have got religion, and I know I have it! Glory be to God!" During the remaining days of the camp meeting (one of the best we ever attended) he was in a high state of religious enjoyment. Within two months we left Alabama, and saw Preston Cooper no more until we met him at Conference, with his round-breasted coat and other itinerant equipments, seeking admission into the saddlebags tribe. He was admitted; and if permitted to continue this history, we shall often meet this deeply pious, talented, faithful, and useful man within the following thirty years. He survived until July, 1858.

There was not much in the appointments of the

preachers this year to require special notice. Robert L. Walker was stationed in Natchez, William M. Curtis was continued in New Orleans, and Thomas Burpo in Mobile. James H. Mellard was appointed to the Alabama District and Ebenezer Hearn to the Cahawba District. Robert L. Kennon was stationed in Tuscaloosa, which had been his home since his first settlement in that part of the State. But he was one of the men that never wore out anywhere. The more people enjoyed his pastoral services, the more they wished them continued. In addition to his deep, unfeigned piety and gentle and courtly manners, he had one of those constantly developing and progressive minds which enabled him "to bring out of his treasure things new and old." To the end of life he was intent on unlocking all the storehouses of divine truth. Ira Byrd and John Cotton were appointed to Big Black Circuit, which had no very definite bounds, so that they had the privilege of following up the new settlers throughout Hinds and Madison Counties.

We now had a fair proportion of experienced and well-tried ministers all over the Conference to place in charge of circuits with the younger men as their colleagues. Many men are evidently called to the work of preaching the gospel whose providential circumstances are such that they cannot continue in or even enter the itinerancy, yet they fill very important and useful stations in the Church at their own expense. The importance and usefulness of local preachers were demonstrated in the early settlement of Alabama and Jackson's Purchase in Mississippi. In many instances they were the pioneer

preachers in the new settlements, collecting the scattered population and raising the standard of Methodism among them; and when the itinerants had gone on their long rounds, the local preachers filled the intervening Sabbaths. The local preachers held class meeting after every Sabbath sermon with as much regularity as the regular pastors. As a body, they have been loyal to the doctrines, laws, and usages of our Church, and have trained the people that they have served the same way, turning over all the fruits of their labors as a part of the general inheritance of the Church. The Alabama part of our Conference was favored with an efficient corps of local preachers, many of whom came in from the older Conferences with the early emigrants, while many others were converted and licensed here. The first and second generation of these devoted men have nearly all passed away, and their very names are being forgotten, appearing only in the short and frequently lost or mislaid minutes of Quarterly Conferences, and barely mentioned in their election to orders in the journals of the Annual Conferences. It is next to impossible to gain any detailed information about them. There were a few who settled early in the Choctaw Purchase and were, to a great extent, the pioneer preachers of their different localities.

Isaac Wills was deservedly conspicuous as a local preacher in Leake and the adjacent counties in their early settlement. He was born in South Carolina in 1783, and when about seventeen years old was converted, and not long afterwards licensed as a local preacher. He emigrated from his native State; and

living awhile in Georgia near where Atlanta now stands, he continued westward and settled on the waters of McGee's Creek, in Franklin County, Miss. Mr. Wills had a very limited education; but he studied his Bible and the writings of Wesley, Fletcher, and others of our earlier standard writers until he was master of all the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. Always in moderate circumstances, he was plain in his person and manners; but being a little over the ordinary size of men, his appearance was commanding. He had a very benevolent countenance, and a prevailing trait of his life was that of love and good will to all. In his sermons he often dwelt on the evangelical history of the vicarious sufferings and death of the Saviour. A peculiar power sometimes attended his pulpit ministrations, and his discourses would be suddenly closed by the loud cries of awakened sinners or the shouts of happy Christians. On such occasions he would say that he was glad to stop and let God carry on his work in his own way. He did a great deal in the way of locating and dedicating new places of worship, both preaching houses and camp grounds, in Leake and the surrounding counties; also in marrying the young folks, baptizing the babies, and preaching funeral sermons. In 1839 he was getting into the maturity of old age, and the people with great respect and affection began to call him Father Wills. His constant theme was a feeling, heart-warming religion, and he loved to narrate in detail all the way in which the Lord his God had hitherto brought him. When seventy-six years old, he died suddenly, and, in accordance with his oft-expressed wishes, was bur-

ied near his beloved Salem Church, where he held his membership.

Madison County, near the geographical center of the State, is bounded by Pearl River on the east and Big Black River on the west. The land is gradually undulating, and was, until worn by culture, almost universally productive. Previous to 1828 it had only a scattered population; from that date emigration flowed in rapidly, and among the newcomers was a fair proportion of Methodist families and local preachers. John Shrock, an ex traveling preacher, settled near Livingston, in the southwestern part of the county, early in 1828, and was an active local preacher. He was a plain, blunt man, with some sharp points in his preaching that made him enemies. Being too sanguine of success in worldly matters, he became deeply involved in debt, which caused him much trouble. He was a true friend to all the interests of the Church and was a valuable acquisition to the early Methodists of Madison County. In 1831 Madison Circuit was left to be supplied, and Thomas Griffin, in whose district it was embraced, employed Mr. Shrock as a supply, and he did a fair year's work. He remained at different places in the county until about 1840, when he moved to Texas.

Samuel Cole, who was recommended from the original Tombigbee Circuit for deacon's orders in 1816 and was elected, was among the early emigrants to Madison County. He formerly lived in the Chickasawhay part of the old Tombigbee Circuit, came from thence to Madison, and settled in the southeastern corner of the county. Mr. Cole was an even-

tempered, quiet, straightforward man and Christian. His ardent piety, mature judgment, peaceable disposition, and consistent life challenged the respect and confidence of all who knew him. In a ripe old age, not many years after his removal to Madison County, he finished his course with joy. Two brothers by the name of Samuel and Joshua Saxon, who were converted and received their early Methodist training at Pisgah Church, in Claiborne County, Miss., and had also been licensed to preach, settled farther up in Madison County, and gave the light of their example and ministry to the early settlers. Samuel Saxon soon moved west to the Mississippi River not far below Lake Providence. Joshua, his brother, remained in Madison, laboring very acceptably and usefully until his death, in the middle of life, greatly beloved by the Church. There were also two brothers by the name of Hubert, who were good men and faithful local preachers in early times in Madison County. Other local preachers came in at a later date. These are only samples of how the local preachers gradually diffused themselves over our late Purchase from the Choctaws.

Mention must be made of a few laymen. Dougall McCall was a Scotchman. We first knew him in our boyhood as a mail rider, under Contractor Reuben Harris, on the Natchez and Nashville Trace. He was a young man of excellent morals, self-reliant and industrious. Next he clerked in a dry goods store just above where Rodney now stands. He married Miss Susan Coleman, of Adams County, and settled as a cotton planter in the southwest corner of Claiborne County. About 1827 or 1828 he at-

tended the camp meeting at Cane Ridge, where he was powerfully converted. He at once gave vent to his enraptured soul in loud shouts of praise to God; and as the more he acknowledged the mercy and love of God in his salvation the stronger his evidence of the divine favor grew, he became a decidedly noisy Christian. He was always inclined to seek an additional blessing at every meeting; and if anybody got happy, Dougall McCall was almost certain to be of the number. He had a way of expressing his joyful feelings by a sort of involuntary loud and rapid laugh, interspersed with appropriate words and sentences of praise and thanksgiving or of exhortation to those around him. He was a very efficient laborer in all the social meetings of the Church. In his home affairs he was industrious and enterprising, and in process of time acquired an ample fortune. Mrs. McCall had been brought up mostly in the faith of the Baptist Church, and it was with some reluctance that she united with the Church of her husband's choice, but she ever after remained an acceptable and devoted member. Mr. McCall died in the faith before our late war, and Mrs. McCall, in advance of seventy years, died in peace within the last few years. They brought up a lovely little family of one daughter and two sons, who are ornaments to society, good citizens, and, we trust, seeking to follow the faith and godly example of their parents.

Michael Hooter, as a Christian, was a character to be admired, loved, and enjoyed. He had attractive qualities, which brought him into notice wherever he appeared. Except in authentic documents and

legal matters, he was never called Michael. His relatives, neighbors, and Church associates universally called him Mike Hooter. He was born on Red River either in Catahoula or Rapides Parish, La., April 5, 1791, and grew to manhood in that locality. He received little education and moral training in his youth, and understood little else than farm work and bear-hunting. He married Miss Cynthia Harrison, who was a near relative of the celebrated Methodist family of Gibsons, of Adams County, Miss. Sometime after his marriage he was attracted to the Pettit Gulf Hills, just east of Rodney, where he opened a farm in the primitive canebrake, and had a fair opportunity of following his favorite sport of bear-hunting. By this time he had become addicted to drinking, and when drunk was exceedingly frolicsome and noisy. In our boyhood he was our neighbor; and when we saw how far he had gone in dissipation, and how much he was under the control of an impetuous temperament, we settled it down in our mind that he would be almost certain to go to a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's hell. Methodist preaching was established at Goodale's Schoolhouse, in his immediate vicinity, and a gracious religious influence began to pervade the community. In one of his sober moments Mike Hooter was brought to reflection and became suddenly and overwhelmingly awakened to a sense of his almost hopeless condition. He knew little about the rules of any Church, and, anxious to be in the safest place to seek his soul's salvation, he hurried to the Baptist church in the neighborhood and offered himself for membership. The pas-

tor asked him if he had yet obtained a hope in Christ. With a fresh burst of penitential grief he answered: "No. That is my greatest trouble! That is what I am seeking, and I thought that I could obtain it sooner in the Church than out of it." The pastor informed him that it was contrary to their faith and order to receive unconverted persons into their Church. This unexpected repulse only made him feel his lost condition more, and he returned home more than ever determined to seek until he found a pardoning God. The few Methodists in the Gulf Hills found out his awakenings and manifested true Christian sympathy by encouraging and praying for him. He determined to join the Methodist Church at the first opportunity. In a short time, with a burdened and sad heart, he went out alone into his cotton field and, kneeling down among the high cotton stalks, poured out his penitent heart in prayer to God, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of his sins. Suddenly unbelief gave way to living, appropriating faith in Christ; the burden of sin and guilt was gone; light, peace, love, and joy filled his soul. He was soon fully in the harness, family prayer was established, all the class and prayer meetings in his reach were attended and richly enjoyed, and he became quite a leader in singing, praying, and exhorting. When, on our far-off circuit, we heard that Mike Hooter had reformed and joined the Church, we had our misgivings. "Can it be possible that he is truly converted? Will he hold out beyond the next 4th of July or Christmas holiday?" Mike Hooter became quite a leader in Israel. There was such an air of earnest

sincerity about him that he generally had the confidence of all who knew him, and those who were not demonstrative themselves were very willing to put up with his noise, in view of his evident usefulness in bringing souls to Christ. When told that some people were wondering why he was so noisy with his religion, he replied as follows: "They ought not to wonder at all if they would only look at the subject as they ought. When I was serving a hard master and wearing a galling yoke, with no bright future before me, I used to go to Rodney and get drunk: then mount my horse and charge round generally, hooting like an owl, screaming like a panther, or yelling like a savage, making more noise than anybody else, so that people along the road could tell that I was going home drunk; but now I am serving a better Master, wearing an easier yoke, carrying a light burden, with a bright and glorious future before me, and why should I not be as zealous and noisy in the service of my blessed Saviour as I used to be in the service of the devil?" There was an unstudied simplicity in the prayers and exhortations of Mike Hooter that added greatly to their interest. It was amusing as well as edifying to hear him leading one of his tent prayer meetings at a camp meeting. He was in his proper sphere of usefulness when he could get a company of penitents and earnest Christians in a tent after the public service closed, and work in the name of the Lord to get souls added to the household of faith; and many were the trophies he won for his Lord and Master in this way. Mike Hooter was holding one of his nocturnal prayer meetings in David Bullen's tent at Cane

Ridge Camp Meeting. The purpose was to persevere until every penitent soul was converted. About four o'clock in the morning a loud shout proclaimed that the last mourner had been brought into the kingdom of Christ, and a general rejoicing ensued. Just then a very aged sister, Mrs. Edna Bullen, one of Tobias Gibson's original eight, who still lingered here below, requested Mr. Hooter to get the praying circle to unite with him in prayer for her, saying that her faith was beclouded; under sore trials and temptations her hope of heaven was not as bright as she desired it to be in her old age; she wanted a full blessing to take home with her from camp meeting. Mr. Hooter immediately called on those present to unite with him in prayer for Aunt Edna, and he led off in about this style: "O Lord, my God, there was a time when Satan desired to get Peter that he might sift him as wheat, and for a short time Peter yielded to the fear of man, got under a cloud, and denied his Saviour; but just as the cock began to crow for day Jesus, who had been praying for him, looked upon him and broke his heart, so that he went out and wept bitterly, and prayed until he recovered from the snare of the devil and got all right again. Now, my Lord, thou seest that that same devil is after this old servant of thine, and has so dimmed the eyes of her faith that she is almost ready to deny that she is an adopted child of thine. Now, Lord, while the chickens are crowing for day, and the approach of day is ready to scatter the darkness of night, drive the devil from this old servant of thine; disperse every cloud of doubt and fear and lift thou upon her the light of thy reconciled countenance,

that she may be reassured that she is still a child of thine and an heir of heaven." The blessing came, and Aunt Edna went on her way rejoicing.

The land in the Pettit Gulf Hills came into great requisition as the best cotton land in the State, and the more wealthy planters began to buy out the less wealthy, until nearly the entire membership of Philadelphia Church sold out and moved to different localities in the New Purchase. Mike Hooter went to the neighborhood of Satartia, in Yazoo County. He had been class leader and exhorter for many years, and such was his ability in expounding and enforcing the truths of the gospel that his brethren thought it best to give him license to preach. We heard a characteristic anecdote of him after his removal to the New Purchase, which is rather too good to be lost. We have already stated the fact that in early manhood he was a noted bear hunter; but for years before leaving the Gulf Hills himself, with several other Nimrods, had well-nigh exterminated the race thereabout. But on entering his new country and finding that bear was plenty, he trained a new team of dogs and entered into the profitable sport with all the vim and delight of his younger days. Bear was so plenty and his dogs became so fond of the sport that they frequently went out unattended and chased Bruin up a tree and sat and barked until their master came with his rifle and brought him down. One Sunday morning they went out early and ran a bear up a tree, and then commenced their usual process of earnest and continuous barking. The attention of Mr. Hooter was arrested by the barking of the dogs; and, listening a moment

to satisfy himself of the reality, he turned away, saying: "That is just like the devil. He knows he could not throw a greater temptation in my way to lead me to break the Sabbath than to instigate my dogs to tree a bear that near my house on Sunday morning. But I'll let that bear alone; I can get him some other day; and the dogs can bark on until fatigue and hunger drive them home; and I'll let the devil know that he can't entrap me into Sabbath-breaking in that way." So saying, he resumed his usual Sabbath duties. He lived, greatly beloved by the Church and respected by the community, until November 30, 1867, when he died in full profession of the Christian's hope, aged seventy-six years. His younger brother, James Hooter, was converted about the same time; and though not so talented and influential as Mike, he was equally pious and very much of the same temperament in his religious enjoyment. He first joined the Baptist Church; but he greatly enjoyed a high state of religious excitement, which led him often into the meetings of the Methodists at Cane Ridge and Philadelphia Churches, where he was sometimes as noisy as his brother Mike. Some of his Baptist brethren complained to him about his course; said that it was mere animal excitement, and that he must abstain from it, or he would fall under the censure of the Church. He replied that he might not know exactly what was meant by "animal excitement," but he knew that his rapturous feelings were produced by "the love of God being shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost," and that the more he acknowledged the goodness of God by praising him in the assembly of saints

the higher his spiritual enjoyment rose. He added that he intended to continue the same course; and that, as he did not wish to annoy any one, he would quietly dissolve his connection with the Baptist Church and unite with the Methodist. Both he and his wife did this. James Hooter sold his real estate in the Gulf Hills and settled in the vicinity of Auburn, in Hinds County, where his house became the resting place of many weary itinerants. He was greatly afflicted with chronic rheumatism; and after his family was mostly dissolved by deaths and removals, he went to live with his brother Mike, in Yazoo County, where he died in his sixty-second year, November 24, 1862. Our excellent Sister Renner, of Natchez, is a daughter of James Hooter.

John M. Folkes was, through a long life, one of the noted Methodists in Coles Creek Circuit. He was born in South Carolina about 1795. About 1800 his parents left South Carolina for the far-famed Natchez country. They made their way to the head waters of the Tennessee River and, in company with other immigrants, in family boats, descended the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers to the mouth of Coles Creek, where they debarked and scattered into the country to the east and south. His parents settled on the South Fork of Coles Creek. This residence was about seven miles southwest of the present town of Fayette and in the vicinity of the famous old Spring Hill Church. Mr. Folkes married Miss Marble, whose parents were among the early and most noted Methodists at Spring Hill. This probably caused Mr. Folkes's ac-

cession to the Church in 1823. He was a truly converted man, and soon after his union with the Church he commenced active operations as a layman. Family religion was established in his home; he was class leader, steward, recording steward, trustee, and filled all these offices with the most exact fidelity. He brought up a large family by his first marriage. By industry and economy he acquired a fine estate, and was a model cotton planter of the olden style, raising stock and provision crops for an ample supply at home, and cotton enough to pay every debt he owed, with some money always on hand. He was liberal to the Church and preachers, and nearly always had money to lend to needy applicants. He not only entertained every passing preacher with the most cordial hospitality, but sometimes boarded the families of the itinerants for months at a time. The "preacher's room" was at the southwest corner of the venerable homestead. In politics he was an unvarying Jacksonian Democrat, and voted as regularly and as conscientiously as he discharged any other religious duty. Having witnessed several times the depreciation of paper money, he rigidly adopted a special currency in all his moneyed transactions, and he would neither give nor receive any other standard of valuation. He must have specie for his salable products, or there was no sale; if he loaned money, it was in specie and had, per contract, to be returned in the same currency. When the quarterage came up from Spring Hill, there were always one or two pieces of gold coin in the package. He adhered to this to the end of life, and his funeral expenses were paid in

gold. He was utterly opposed to all sorts of pictures and statuary representing human beings. He thought this led to the idolatrous worship of heroes among the ancient heathens and the worship of saints in the Roman Catholic Church. When he was far advanced in life, some of his children became very anxious to have his likeness, and contrived to get it without his consent. One of the family bargained with a daguerrotypist to have his camera ready just inside the courthouse at Fayette, and when Mr. Folkes mounted his horse to leave town he would stop him before the door to have a few parting words with him, and hold his horse in a position to have the picture taken. The plan was successful, and an equestrian picture of the old patriarch was secured. Mr. Folkes was an uncompromising advocate for having the gospel preached to the negroes, and for this purpose he converted what had once been a dwelling house on his estate into a chapel, where he had his own and his neighbors' negroes regularly furnished with the gospel and ordinances of the Church, often leading their devotions himself. In this he persevered at considerable expense until his church was destroyed and its congregation dispersed by the results of the late war. The war left Mr. Folkes, like thousands of other cotton planters, with nothing but his land, some remnants of stock, and what ready money he had on hand. He soon adjusted himself to his new and oppressive circumstances, and became quite handy in almost every outdoor and household work. Until totally disabled by age, with no family but his aged wife, he persisted in keeping up his family de-

votions evening and morning, at which times he read, lined out, and sang a hymn in the old Methodist style, and then prayed a comprehensive prayer. Like the patriarch Jacob, he adjusted his family affairs with great precision, commended himself in faith to his all-sufficient Saviour, and died in holy peace May 18, 1873. The maiden name of the wife that survives him was Eliza Scott, the eldest daughter of the good Gabriel and Abigail (née Griffing) Scott heretofore mentioned in this history.

This year (1829) was a good year in the Conference. We had an increase of eight hundred and seventeen white and six hundred and seventy-one colored members. Our most extraordinary increase was in our Choctaw Mission. Dr. Talley and his colleagues held several camp meetings in the Nation during the year, attended with extraordinary physical manifestations, especially the "falling exercise," and conversions were numbered by the thousand. The net increase among the Choctaws was two thousand eight hundred and forty-three, in addition to the four hundred returned at our late Conference.

As Dr. Talley had to pass directly through our circuit on his way to Conference and intended to bring an interpreter, with a delegation of converted Choctaws of both sexes, we appointed a two days' missionary meeting at Cane Ridge. They were on the ground in due time, and so were the people from all the region round about, anxious to see the strange sight. Choctaw Indians were no strange sight, for they had long been our near neighbors; but Christian Indians—Choctaws that could sing and pray

and talk about religion and get happy—were the novel attraction. The crowd was so great that we had to abandon the church and worship on the camp ground. It was indeed a great occasion to the white natives to see these children of the forest Christians, to hear them sing hymns in their own language with their melodious voices, using our old familiar tunes, and to hear them pray and tell their Christian experience through the interpreter. We raised four hundred dollars on the occasion in aid of the mission. Our net increase this year, including all colors, was four thousand three hundred and thirty-one. The correct orthography of our Indian neighbors' tribal name is spelled in their own language without the final w; but as it is so universally pronounced Choctaw by the whites, we shall continue to spell it that way.

CHAPTER VIII.

1829.

THE Mississippi District at this time extended from Leaf River on the east to Lake St. Joseph west of the Mississippi River and from the line of the Choctaw Nation on the north to the southern boundary of Jefferson and Copiah Counties. Thomas Griffin, the presiding elder, kept all the interests of the Church moving forward in this vast field, much of which had been but recently settled by white people. The higher lands in the overflowed country west of the Mississippi River were just now coming into market, and a number of the members and patrons of our Church had located on the river and on the various lakes and bayous in the swamp. Their desire for a preacher had given rise to the formation of Lake St. Joseph Circuit last year. Mr. Griffin transferred Samuel Walker, the junior preacher on Bayou Pierre Circuit, to this new field. Mr. Walker was a very small man, with a limited education, but he was all preacher what little there was of him. He did a faithful year's work, and returned a membership of ninety-six white and twenty-five colored members.

Our people in the new county of Yazoo also applied for a preacher, and Mr. Griffin sent them John Cotton, the colleague of Ira Byrd, on Big Black Circuit, who organized what was long known as Yazoo

Circuit, and returned a membership of ninety-two. This arrangement left Mr. Byrd with more than he was able to attend to on Big Black Circuit, as it embraced both Hinds and Madison Counties, which were being rapidly settled. To relieve Mr. Byrd of an overburden and to meet an obvious want, Mr. Griffin had a new circuit improvised in Madison County called Standing Persimmon, the name of a noted creek in its bounds. This name never appeared, even in the written journal, except in the recommendation of Joshua Saxon for deacon's orders; but it was the foundation of what was this year called Madison, which became one of the most productive circuits in the Mississippi Conference. Thomas Griffin was now in the maturity of his ministerial life, and was the right man for this new country.

The Conference which begins this ecclesiastical year assembled at Washington, Miss., December 17, 1829. Bishop Roberts was present, he and William McMahan having come on horseback from the Tennessee Conference, which had lately been held at Huntsville, Ala. We now miss the legible style and correct orthography of proper names of William Winans, so long the Secretary of our Conference, Joseph McDowell having been elected to that office at this Conference. Mr. Winans's exhausted strength and nervousness, with his extra duties in the Bishop's council, would not permit this addition to his labor. This annual session was well attended from the three States.

We were indebted to the Masonic Fraternity for a very commodious hall in which to hold the Con-

ference, and for which we returned them our grateful acknowledgments. The Conference again, with due consideration, "Resolved that the candidates for admission and those who remain on trial, with our local brethren and visiting ministers from other Conferences, be admitted as spectators." Mark Westmoreland, Joseph P. Snead, Daniel Sears, James P. Thomas, Job Foster, Richard J. Warner, William Cobb, William Redwine, Hardy Mullins, and Daniel Barlow were admitted on trial. Thomas Lynch was discontinued, and so were Joshua Peavy, Felix Wood, and William C. Gayle, at their own request. Thomas Lynch was the son-in-law of the celebrated Mark Moore, and was at this time in mature manhood, fairly educated, and capable of associating with the most intelligent and refined society, and withal was well read in theology, but was so wanting in self-confidence that he frequently broke down in the middle of his sermons and abruptly closed the service. Such complaints were made to his presiding elder on this account that he thought it best to recommend his discontinuance for the present. In January, 1839, Mr. Lynch reappeared in the Alabama Conference, and soon rose to distinction among his collaborators, being stationed in the city of Tuscaloosa the first year, and the second appointed presiding elder of the Talladega District, having graduated to elder's orders as a local preacher. He continued to fill some of the most important charges in the Alabama Conference until advanced age required him to be placed on the superannuated roll, which relation he sustained until his triumphant death, in 1864.

Henry Stephenson, Benjamin F. Coxe, Francis A. McWilliams, Daniel D. Brewer, Andrew Adams, Richard Pipkin, John Bilbo, Preston Cooper, Nathan Hopkins, Eugene V. Le Vert, Benjamin B. Smith, Blanton P. Box, Samuel Walker, and John A. Cotton were continued on trial. Daniel H. Norwood, Robert D. Smith, and John Mathews were received into full connection. Thomas C. Brown, Meredith Renneau, and Daniel Monaghan were readmitted. Mr. Monaghan had formerly belonged to the South Carolina Conference, but located and removed to the Canebrake, in Marengo County, Ala. He was a faithful and a powerful preacher. His enunciation was rapid and monotonous, but interspersed with such native wit as kept the attention fixed. He was set off with the Alabama Conference, where he remained a faithful, acceptable, and useful laborer until his death, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, which occurred March 20, 1841. Joseph McDowell, Orsamus L. Nash, Benjamin A. Houghton, Richard H. Herbert, and Robert D. Smith were ordained elders. Mr. Smith, by the request of Dr. Talley, was ordained elder two years in advance of his regular time in view of his missionary work in the Choctaw Nation. Richard H. Herbert, John C. Burruss, William Spruill, Henry J. Brown, Hugh A. McPhail, and Daniel H. Norwood located at their own request. William V. Douglas was placed on the supernumerary list and Miles Harper was expelled. From the local ranks Hardy Mullins, Anthony T. Simmons, Samuel Dawson, Jacob M. Early, Samuel Wilkinson, John Scarbrough, John Taggert, Joshua Saxon, and Willis Garner were elected to

deacon's orders, and Thomas C. Brown, Thomas Mel-lard, Felix Wood, Stephen Tunnell, H. Harris, and W. Harris to elder's orders. Thomas Owens was still a great favorite in the Conference; and though personal debility, the repeated illness of his wife, and his domestic circumstances several times induced him to ask for a location, it was never granted, the Conference preferring to keep him on the honored roll of worthy superannuates. God in his good providence has given us our "little Tommy Owens," and he was the only one we had or ever had, and we could not consent to see him retire from our body. We needed him at our annual sessions to overcome any little asperity that might flash up in the earnestness of debate, and to keep us all in good humor by his spontaneous wit and pleasantry. We left him without an appointment this year at his own request. Peter James was also left without an appointment at his own request.

A great affliction overwhelmed this Conference in the expulsion of Miles Harper from the Conference and Church; and what added to this weight of sorrow was the settled conviction on many minds that the disastrous result was reached by prejudice and exaggerated and misconstrued testimony. Mr. Harper's family lived on a little farm in the vicinity of Washington, where the Conference was now in session. Mr. Winans was the presiding elder, Mr. Drake the stationed preacher in Washington, and Mr. Harper on Adams Circuit. The interests of the Church were going on smoothly, when the subject of holding a joint camp meeting between Washington Station and Adams Circuit was agitated. Mr. Winans, be-

ing on a visit to Washington, after consulting with Mr. Drake and some leading members of his charge, agreed on the time and place for holding the camp meeting, thinking that Mr. Harper would coincide with them and coöperate in holding the meeting. Mr. Harper, being by several years the senior in the ministry of Mr. Winans and many more of Mr. Drake, allowed himself to feel slighted at not being invited to the consultation, and so expressed himself to several prominent men in the Church. This was hastily construed into personal opposition to presiding elder and pastor, and also to the camp meeting under their leadership. When Mr. Harper was accused of hostile feelings, he promptly denied any such feeling or word or act leading in that direction. This denial was construed into a denial of what he had affirmed on the former occasions, and hence the charge of falsehood. The camp meeting was held, Mr. Harper and his adherents taking an active interest in its promotion. Soon after the camp meeting Mr. Harper was arraigned before a committee of traveling preachers under a charge of falsehood. He affirmed his innocence; but as those who heard had been summoned as witnesses against him, he had no available testimony to prove his innocence, and he was accordingly suspended until the meeting of the Annual Conference. The same testimony, given by the same witnesses before the committee, was introduced in the Conference; and while Mr. Harper still affirmed his innocence, he had no available testimony to establish it. The minds of many of the preachers were embarrassed. The weight of the testimony against the accused mainly hinged on the affirma-

tion of one man; but here were not only three but more than three witnesses testifying against an elder, and while he steadily averred his innocence, he had no witnesses by whom to prove it. Whatever their private opinion might be, they had to be governed by the testimony before them. Several, by their own request, were excused from voting. A motion was made by some one not named in the Journal that Mr. Harper be found guilty of falsehood, which motion prevailed. Mr. Winans, seconded by Benjamin A. Houghton, moved that he be expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church, a majority voting for and a respectable minority voting against it. It was in the afternoon, and Mr. Harper, being requested to withdraw from the Conference room, had ridden out to his home in the country. That evening or early next morning he was informed of the decision of the Conference and summoned to appear before the Conference early in the session of the day to receive his sentence. When the venerable man, after twenty-six years laboriously spent in the ministry, stood up in the Conference to receive his sentence, Bishop Roberts performed the painful duty assigned him in the most delicate, brotherly, and affectionate manner. Mr. Harper briefly replied that he still felt innocent of the charge of falsehood; he had not knowingly made any untrue statement; he did not blame either the Bishop or the body of the Conference for his present afflicting position; the blame lay against others; he felt a weight of sorrow that day that had never oppressed his heart before; when he that morning called his weeping family together and led their usual family devotions, with

a consciousness that he was beyond the pale of the Christian Church, the anguish of his heart was unutterable; he wished the Conference continued prosperity, asked his brethren to pray for him that his faith might not fail, and that he might not be permitted to fall into sin, and then, with a meek and subdued countenance, retired from the Conference. None of the testimony is preserved in the Journal, and no details are recorded beyond the nature of the charge and the vote of his guilt and expulsion. We have had to depend on our memory for all the details. We traveled an adjoining circuit that year, attended the camp meeting which was the cause of the trouble, and were present and took great interest in the trial before the Conference; and to this day we do not see why that unpleasantness about the camp meeting was not amicably settled by a private Christian conference. Mr. Harper did not long cease to preach, for many of his acquaintances, both in and out of the Church, believed him innocent, and solicited a continuance of his services in the ministry. Mr. Harper was a thorough Methodist in doctrine and Church polity, and admitted no arrangement to unite with any other branch of the Church. He continued to preach four years as an independent Methodist preacher. Under our rules he could not return to the Church without contrition, confession, and evidence of amendment; and these conditions he could not comply with, for, whatever others might believe, he affirmed that he was innocent of any intentional wrong. In the fall of 1833, by some episcopal arrangement, Francis A. Owens, of the Tennessee Conference, was stationed in the

city of Natchez and continued there for 1834. Mr. Owens was an acquaintance and admirer of Miles Harper, who had formerly been a member of the Tennessee Conference. Mr. Owens soon visited and had a conversation with Mr. Harper about his Church relations. Mr. Harper told him that he could not offer himself to the Church in Washington, as it contained some of the men who had witnessed against him, and who, under the law of the Church, might demand of him evidence of contrition and amendment, which his conscious innocence would not permit. Mr. Owens, after consulting the leading members of the Church in Natchez, informed him that he could be received there without any of these requirements. Early in 1834 Bishop McKendree, in the extreme feebleness of old age, made his last visit to Natchez. As Miles Harper and he in the long past had labored happily and successfully together in the famous old Western Conference, and as the Bishop had once enjoyed the hospitality and careful nursing of Mrs. Harper's father, Rev. John Ford, of Pearl River, and his family, during a protracted attack of illness, he came out to Washington and spent several days with Mr. Harper and his family, and improved the opportunity to soothe his lacerated feelings and encourage his return to the Church. Mr. Harper took the advice of his old and steadfast friends and united with the Church in Natchez, and was soon recognized by his brethren as a Methodist minister in good standing. He left Washington and commenced opening a farm in the Mississippi Bottom, in Tensas Parish, La., where

he ended his journey in peace with an assurance of entering into rest.

Mrs. Harper was a very lovely Christian lady. She was a daughter of that stanch old local preacher of Pearl River notoriety, Rev. John Ford, at whose house Bishop McKendree held the Mississippi Conference in the fall of 1818. Having been brought up in the lap of Methodism, she loved the Church and took a deep interest in all its movements. She maintained her personal piety to the end of life, and died in a good old age many years after the death of her husband.

William V. Douglas came up to Conference suspended by a committee. The charges against him were imprudent and unchristian conduct and falsehood. After a full investigation, the charge of falsehood was not sustained; but, with becoming regret, he acknowledged that in a moment of severe trial he had acted both imprudently and in a way quite unbecoming a Christian. By a resolution of the Conference he received a suitable admonition from the Chair, and there the matter ended. How much better it accords with the spirit of our heaven-descended Christianity to forgive and restore a brother who has been overtaken in a fault than to goad him to desperation by extreme measures! Our female academies at Washington, Miss., and Tuscaloosa, Ala., were reported to be in a healthy condition, and all their interests were duly considered. At our previous Conference we had resolved to unite with the Tennessee Conference in the establishment of Lagrange College; and as we were pledged to the patronage of Augusta College, in Kentucky, we in-

formed the President of that college that our patronage hereafter would be given to Lagrange. Rev. William McMahan was again present as the representative of the Tennessee Conference in behalf of Lagrange, and presented a constitution which had been adopted by the Tennessee Conference for the government of the college. This constitution was thoroughly analyzed by our Conference and sundry amendments proposed. The Conference concurred in the election of Rev. Robert Paine as President, with two professors, who were expected to open the college for students at the earliest opportunity. A Board of Commissioners was appointed to meet a similar Board from the Tennessee Conference at Lagrange in order to perfect and put into immediate operation our plans. The preachers were also instructed to raise by subscription on their different charges what funds they could for the erection of buildings and endowment of the college.

The first society in our territory, formed by Tobias Gibson in 1799, consisted of eight persons, two of whom were negroes—a man and his wife. From that time forward our preachers paid due attention to the religious wants of the colored people as far as circumstances would permit. For a long time they were thinly scattered among the white population, few persons owning many of them, so that they were served in connection with the white congregations. In building their churches our forefathers generally provided a suitable place for the colored people to sit. They were admitted to Church membership, had access to the sacraments and social meetings of the Church, and were cared for by

every pastor as a legitimate part of his charge. As they increased in numbers, they were frequently preached to in separate congregations, and were encouraged to hold religious meetings, properly conducted, among themselves. No one anticipated any evil consequences from granting them all essential religious privileges, either to the white or colored people, until the antislavery men and abolitionists of the Northern States began to stir up strife on the subject of a forced emancipation. There never was any controversy in the Mississippi Conference on the subject of slavery. The Journal is not disfigured in a single instance either by a slavery or antislavery resolution. The Conference looked on it as a civil institution entailed on the country by those who had lived before, and as protected and its perpetuity guaranteed by the constitution of the United States and the constitutions and laws of the States embraced in the Conference territory; and whatever we might feel at liberty to say or do in our capacity as citizens of the country, we did not look on slavery as a legitimate subject to be discussed either in our Church meetings or Annual Conferences. Our sole duty was to preach the gospel faithfully both to master and slave, and enforce on each the faithful discharge of all their relative Christian duties as plainly taught in the Word of God, and encourage them to serve their common Father in heaven faithfully together, and live in joyful hope of a better life in the great hereafter.

The negro population had so increased, especially in the rich land districts on the margins of our numerous rivers and bayous, that it became necessary

to take an **advanced** step in order to reach them all with the **gospel**. Thomas Clinton offered the first resolution that appears on our Journal, to "instruct our **missionary** committee to inquire into the expediency of **sending** missionaries to the people of color in our own country, which resolution prevailed;" and from this time until universal emancipation took place our colored missions and pastoral charges became an important part of our regular ministerial work. Whatever may be the result of their present separate and independent Church organizations, the truth of history will forever show that up to the time of their emancipation all the Church privileges that they ever had and all that they possessed of Christian knowledge had been given them by Southern ministers and Southern Churches; and mainly by the ministers and members of what is now known as the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Our record as a Church will compare **favorably** with the requisitions of the New Testament scriptures in relation both to master and slave.

The cause in New Orleans was advancing with accelerated motion, and was beginning to be permanently settled in the city. William Winans was no longer needed as a special agent "for the New Orleans meetinghouse business;" that was now confided to the **pastor** and official board. The Church had by some means come into possession of a lot on the corner of St. Joseph and St. Charles Streets, which had lately been sold according to the Discipline, and the **proceeds** placed at the disposal of the Conference for the benefit of the Church in the city.

The Conference instructed the preacher in charge to receive the money from the stewards, and after paying a small balance against our little church on Gravier Street and making some needed repairs to invest the surplus at interest as the foundation of a fund for the erection of a parsonage. It was long before that parsonage was built, if it ever was.

After a protracted session of ten days, Conference adjourned on Saturday morning, having fixed upon Tuscaloosa, Ala., as the place of its next sitting, and Bishop Roberts appointing November 24, 1830, as the time. The failing strength of William Winans required that he should be released from the Washington District at the end of his third year, and Barnabas Pipkin was appointed as his successor. In order to give Mr. Winans an opportunity of resting and recruiting a little, he was appointed Conference Agent to raise missionary and other Church funds. William Stephenson and Ashley Hewitt were declared effective, and Ashley Hewitt, in hope of recruiting from the effects of his long continuance in the humid atmosphere of Western Louisiana, had removed to the cane hills in the rear of Vicksburg a year ago and was appointed to Warren Circuit, where he was continued the present year. The Mississippi District was partially remodeled and the name changed to Bayou Pierre, with Thomas Griffin continued as presiding elder. Lake Providence Mission was revived, placed in the Bayou Pierre District, and Francis A. McWilliams appointed in charge. Yazoo Circuit was put on the roll of pastoral charges and John Cotton continued there. The improvised circuit of the past year in

Madison County, called Standing Persimmon, took the name of Madison, with Benjamin F. Coxe in charge. The valley of Big Black River had become noted for its unhealthiness. Lewellen Leggett, its first preacher, had died, and others had been sick, so that many of the preachers dreaded the thought of being sent to Big Black Circuit. The very name conveyed the idea of malarial chills and bilious fevers. A strong Methodist settlement had formed midway between Big Black and Pearl River, near the northwestern corner of Copiah County. At a place rich in pure spring water they built a church and camp ground, which became noted as the headquarters of Methodism in that region. They called the church and camp ground Crystal Spring; and as it was the most important point on Big Black Circuit, the name of the circuit was changed to that of Crystal Spring, and from this date the circuit was thought to be as healthy as any in the Conference. The new name conveyed the idea of pure, limpid water in a high, healthy location. Verily there is something in a name. No change was made in the Louisiana District except the addition of a new circuit called Little River. This circuit was made out of territory a portion of which had been partially occupied from the early days of Methodism in Western Louisiana, and lay mostly in the parish of Catahoula, embracing Boeuf Prairie, and Sicily Island, east of the Washita River, and the country west of that river between Harrisonburg and Alexandria. Isaac V. Enochs was appointed in charge. In the Washington District, Orsamus L. Nash was stationed in Natchez and William M. Curtis contin-

ued in New Orleans. Washington Station and Adams Circuit were reunited, and Benjamin M. Drake, who was still President of Elizabeth Female Academy, was put in charge. In the Alabama District, Robert L. Walker succeeded Thomas Burpo in Mobile, and Mr. Burpo was appointed to organize a new charge on the Alabama River called Claiborne. This was a second effort to erect the town of Claiborne into a station, which seems to have failed again, as the name does not appear on our Journal afterwards.

Another new work was organized, mostly in the southern part of Greene County, called in the General Minutes Prairie, but in our Journal Prairie Creek, the name having been suggested by that of a creek in the central portion of the circuit. This territory had formerly composed the southern part of the old Tuscaloosa Circuit. Thomas S. Abernathy was appointed to organize and take charge of this circuit. In the Cahawba District, Robert L. Kennon was continued in the city of Tuscaloosa. A new work was organized, with appointments taken from the older circuits in the vicinity of Columbus, which took the name of Columbus, this growing town being the chief point of interest in its bounds. Preston Cooper was appointed in charge.

Montgomery, on the left bank of the Alabama River, and since 1847 the capital of the State, was this year put on the roll of regular pastoral charges for the first time as a station. The introduction and progress of Methodism in Montgomery is a very striking illustration of its rise and progress in many

other localities, and is well calculated to extort the exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" Montgomery and the surrounding country were settled soon after the extinction of the Indian title. As early as 1819 there were people enough in the town and vicinity to require the services of a minister. Several Methodist families from the older States had settled in the new community, and were anxiously looking for the coming of the itinerant. Among the Methodist emigrants was the family of Mrs. Flora Mills, from North Carolina. Mrs. Mills prevailed on a local preacher by the name of James King to spend several months in the town and surrounding country in 1819 and preach for them in their destitution. The services of Mr. King were both acceptable and useful, and he had the honor of being the pioneer preacher in Montgomery. In 1820 it was included in Thomas Nixon's first Alabama circuit, which was six hundred miles round. From this date Montgomery was visited at irregular intervals by the itinerant preachers, but there is no account of any regular organization of our Church until 1829. A log meetinghouse had been built about two miles distant, where a society had been formed by emigrant Methodists, in 1821, and known as the Mills and Westcott Church. This original Church was composed of Thomas Hatchett, David Westcott, Thomas Nichols, Mrs. Flora Mills, and Mrs. John G. Ashley and their families. They were Methodists of the true stamp, and kept up all their Church meetings with prompt regularity and zeal. What few members were in the town held their membership at this country Church and went out there to

hear preaching and attend class meetings. If one of the early Methodistic traditions of Montgomery is true, it indicates clearly the direction Bishop George took after holding the Mississippi Conference, in Washington, Miss., in December, 1821. The tradition is that in January, 1822, Bishop George, in traveling eastward, stopped at Montgomery and preached to a large audience in the courthouse, which marked quite an era in the early history of the Church there. Bishop George was on his way to Charleston, S. C., where he was to meet the South Carolina Conference in January. For several years both the local and traveling preachers filled their appointments in Montgomery either in private houses or in the courthouse. Dr. Moses Andrew, a local preacher, lived a number of years in the town before his removal to Tuscaloosa, and often preached to the villagers in the courthouse. During his residence there he united with Mr. William Sayre, a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church, in encouraging the people to build a union church, which for a time answered as a preaching place for all Protestant denominations. The house was left unfinished until a majority of those who subscribed to its erection offered to turn it over to any denomination that would finish and furnish it. The Methodists were anxious to accept the offer, but they were too poor and too much divided by the Associated Methodists to act in concert. The result was that the Presbyterians and Baptists finished the house and occupied most of the Sabbath time. This put the Methodists at a great disadvantage, which is very often the result of their union enterprises.

About 1828 the country log church, two miles distant from ~~Montgomery~~, being dilapidated, and the members being too much divided by the Associated Methodists to keep up a respectable organization, those who still adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church consented to unite with the members in town in the organization of the first Methodist Church in ~~Montgomery~~. September 15, 1829, is given as the date when this organization was completed. Rev. James H. Mellard, who officiated on the occasion, was presiding elder of the Alabama District. The members who composed the first regularly organized Methodist Episcopal Church in ~~Montgomery~~ are as follows: Thomas and Rachel Hatchett, Eliza Westcott, Susanna Nichols, Susanna Murrell, Cecilia Williamson, Lavinia Brothers, Mary T. Clifton, Eliza P. Blue, and Mrs. S. Fields. This little society of ten formed the original nucleus around which vast multitudes of holy men and women have since rallied and formed their characters for heaven. During the present year this little band was strengthened by the addition of Neill Blue, Zechariah Fields, Harriet Amanda Blue (not then quite eleven years old), William Y., Willis, and Catherine Higgins, Hardy Herbert, R. H. Dart, Ann Spencer, Robert and Catherine Parker (from the Wesleyan Church in London), Richard Morgan, and Charles G. Rush. Thirty-two colored members were received. Such was their poverty that they were unable to raise five hundred dollars to buy the lot on which the union church stood. In 1875 their successors worshiped in a spacious edifice that cost twenty-five thousand dollars and can seat comfortably two

thousand hearers, with a white membership of five hundred.

Those eminently pious and exemplary ladies, by their prayers, good works, and holy living, contributed much to the introduction and permanent establishment of Methodism in Montgomery. They not only invited the ministers to preach in Montgomery and entertained them while there with a liberal hospitality, but with their own fair hands prepared rooms for them to preach in until a church was built. Lydia, Paul's first convert in Philippi, was not more efficient in building up the first Christian Church in that city than were Eliza P. Blue, Lavinia Brothers, Mary T. Clopton, and their associates in introducing and giving a permanent and prosperous existence to Methodism in Montgomery. All these "elect ladies" have gone to their reward except Eliza Westcott, who still holds her membership in Montgomery. Eliza P. Blue was the wife of the now venerable Neill Blue, the first person that joined the newly organized Church on probation, and has since been one of the most reliable financiers in all our Church enterprises in the State capital. They were the honored parents of Rev. Oliver R. Blue, a prominent member of the Alabama Conference. She died of yellow fever in Montgomery October 20, 1854, ready for the summons. Such was the death also of Lavinia Brothers, in 1832, aged sixty years. The beloved Mary T. Clopton, the refined, intellectual, and exemplary wife of Dr. J. B. Clopton, remained to adorn the doctrine of Christ her Saviour until August 8, 1873; she slept in Christ at the age of seventy-eight.

Rev. Benjamin A. Houghton, the first stationed preacher in **Montgomery**, was a faithful, good young minister, attentive to all his pastoral duties, and a clear expositor of the doctrines of Christianity, but deficient in "pulpit power." How much easier it was to introduce and extend Methodist Christianity in all the newly founded Protestant cities in our Conference territory than it was in those old Catholic cities and towns—Mobile, Pensacola, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Natchitoches, etc.—where the minds of the people had been beclouded by the ignorance, superstition, and bigotry of a false religion!

The Choctaw Mission continued under the superintendence of Dr. Talley, with Robert D. Smith and Moses Perry as assistants. In addition to the three circuits already occupied, Dr. Talley had planned four others, which were left to be supplied. The Choctaw Nation at this time owned only about one-tenth of the territory which had belonged to them thirty years before, and which they had at various times sold to the United States. Already the better portions of the lands ceded by them to the government had become occupied, and the large influx of emigrants from the older States began to demand the final withdrawal of the Choctaws from Mississippi and their settlement in the West. In order to hasten their removal, the Legislature extended the jurisdiction of the State over them, and made them amenable to its laws. The educated and leading men of the Nation saw that their removal was inevitable, and reluctantly entered into negotiations with the Federal government for the final cession

of all their country east of the Mississippi River except reservations to such Indians as preferred to remain. The treaty was concluded on the 27th of September, 1830, and two years were allowed for their removal to the territory assigned them west of the State of Arkansas. The preliminary discussion and final settlement of this treaty, with the very natural distress occasioned by leaving the homes and graves of their ancestors, in connection with the disorganization and bustle of moving in vast crowds to the West, was unavoidably unfavorable to their religious progress. Most of them maintained their religious and Methodistic integrity through all these trying scenes, and finally settled in their new country as Christians, and have continued their adhesion to the Church to the present day. One of the missionaries, Rev. Moses Perry, married a clever and pious Choctaw woman this year and voluntarily fixed his destiny and that of his posterity with the Nation. He had great influence as a preacher among the Indians. He was adopted as one of the tribe, removed with them to their wilderness home in the West, and has ever since remained among them, a pious and useful minister. Mrs. Ben Leflore became the subject of deep awakenings. Her season of penitence was protracted. She became very much discouraged, and feared that God did not understand the Choctaw language sufficiently to comprehend her prayers. She would go below the line and spend a night with her friend, Mrs. Coher, and seek her advice and prayers. She informed Mrs. Coher that when she prayed in her own language her prayers went on without hesitation, but when

she tried to pray in English it took so much time to recall appropriate words that it interrupted her feelings. She feared God did not approve of prayers in the Choctaw language, as he had not yet given her the blessing she had so long sought. Mrs. Coher assured her that it was only a temptation of Satan; that acceptable prayer was when the heart talked with God and asked him for what was needed in the name of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and that the language used was not a matter of importance, as God understood and accepted all languages when the heart prayed. Mrs. Leflore was edified and comforted, and soon became an experienced Christian.

Our appointment this year was Port Gibson, including a small week-day congregation at Grand Gulf and two other small country congregations. This little charge was a new sort of work with us, and quite inconsistent with our former habits of traveling large circuits and preaching to crowded congregations. Being so circumscribed, with little provision made for our support and comfort in the early part of the year, made us sigh for the ever-changing scenery and freedom of a large circuit. Ours was the first church edifice erected in Port Gibson. While Rev. John C. Burruss was the supply here, in 1826, he obtained an eligible lot (the same on which the present elegant church stands) and raised a subscription in time to lay the corner stone on the 30th of September. The ceremony was performed by the officers of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, assisted by the Masonic Brotherhood in Port Gibson. Through the thoughtful kindness of Mr. G. J. Bahin, of Natchez, we now have before us a

printed copy of the able and eloquent address delivered on the occasion by the most worthy Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, Rev. Mr. Pilmore. For a time prospects were flattering for the early completion of the church, but the popular talents of Mr. Burruss were withdrawn, and a variety of circumstances conspired to hinder the completion of the church. In 1830 the house was floored and furnished with unpainted pulpit and seats, and a debt was hanging over it which it seemed impossible to liquidate without help from abroad. Thomas Griffin, our presiding elder, proposed that we visit our members and patrons in the adjacent counties, and invoke their aid in releasing the Church from its threatening creditors. While we were laboring to accomplish this desired object, we had the pleasure of attending a number of very refreshing camp meetings.

When God is pleased to pour out his Holy Spirit on a whole community, there are generally some very extraordinary manifestations of saving grace in individual cases. On St. Joseph Circuit the first place above the Point Pleasant plantation, on the right bank of the Mississippi River, was owned by a family by the name of Graham. It consisted of two brothers, their mother, and the family of James Graham and one or two others. James Graham was considered the head of the family, and he had yielded to the mistaken notion that to enjoy health in the swamp he must drink whisky several times each day. For this purpose he supplied himself with a barrel at a time. The Rev. Mr. Filer, of Natchez, a Presbyterian minister, had married Mrs. Turner,

the owner of the Point Pleasant plantation, and occasionally went up and spent several days with his superintendent, taking with him ample supply of religious tracts for gratuitous distribution among the new settlers. On one of those visits James Graham walked down to spend an hour or so with Mr. Filer. When about to leave, Mr. Filer presented him with several tracts. As he walked home, across the level plantation, he read one on the religious responsibilities of heads of families, which proved "sharper than a two-edged sword." He at once resolved, by the help of God, to become a Christian himself and do everything in his power to get his family to unite with him in seeking a preparation for heaven; and as he looked upon the daily use of whisky in his house as the greatest obstacle in the way, he determined to remove it summarily. He proceeded to his storeroom, rolled the barrel of whisky out, and picked up an ax. Mrs. Graham, seeing his movements, inquired: "Mr. Graham, what in the world are you going to do with that barrel of whisky?" "I am going," said he, "to offer a sacrifice to God, the best I can offer for the present." "Man alive!" said his wife, "you must be either drunk or crazy!" By this time the well-aimed blow had been struck. He then laid down his ax, and in a firm tone of voice said to Mrs. Graham that he was neither drunk nor crazy; that Parson Filer had presented him with several religious tracts, one of which he had read as he walked home and which had convinced him that he was a great sinner and was cursing his family with a bad example. He had determined instantly to change his course, and he hoped

his family would unite with him in the service of God. His house soon became a preaching place, and most of the family, if not all, became spiritual members of the Church. Mr. Graham first became a very active and useful layman and then a local preacher.

The aggregate number of members (exclusive of the traveling preachers) now under our charge was nineteen thousand five hundred and fifty-two. We returned to Port Gibson from our camp meeting campaign and collecting tour having received enough in money and subscriptions to place our church beyond the danger of being sold for debt. We succeeded in getting up a camp meeting at Shiloh, one of our country appointments, where some good was done. The conversion of one youth there who afterwards became the head of a large family nearly all of whom from generation to generation have become Methodists was ample compensation for the labors and expense of the camp meeting.

CHAPTER IX.

1830.

ACCORDING to appointment, the Conference met in Tuscaloosa, Ala., November 24, 1830. Neither of the superintendents being present, Ebenezer Hearn, the presiding elder of the Cahawba District, was requested to open the Conference and to preside the first day. No bishop appearing the second day, the Conference then proceeded to elect a President from the presiding elders, there being but two present. James H. Mellard was elected. Joseph McDowell was elected Secretary. The distance to Tuscaloosa being great and the season of the year usually inclement, an unusual number of preachers were absent, especially from Western Mississippi and Louisiana, including some of our most experienced counselors. This, in connection with the absence of a bishop, made business progress slowly, but about as satisfactorily as usual. The undergraduates were again admitted to the Conference room as spectators by formal vote. Jacob Mathews, Anthony Dickinson, Jacob Segrist (deacon elect), John B. Higginbotham, Bevil Taylor (in elder's orders), Isaac Applewhite, James Applewhite, Washington Ford, Joshua Peavy (elder elect), William Howie, Charles McLeod, Needham B. Raiford, Newet Drew, William Weir, and Jesse Ellis (deacon elect)—fifteen in all—were admitted on trial. Francis A. McWilliams,

Blanton P. Box, Andrew Adams, Richard J. Warner, William Redwine, and Henry Stephenson were discontinued at their own request, Mr. Warner on account of ill health and Mr. Stephenson on account of family claims. James P. Thomas, Job Foster, Hardy Mullins, William B. Cobb, Joseph P. Snead, Daniel Sears, John Bilbo, Francis H. Jones (transferred from the Tennessee Conference), and Daniel B. Barlow were continued on trial, William B. Cobb with the understanding that he guard against certain indiscretions in his conversation and conduct hereafter. Eugene V. Le Vert, Richard Pipkin, David Harkey, Benjamin F. Coxe, Preston Cooper, Daniel D. Brewer, John A. Cotton, Nathan Hopkins, Benjamin B. Smith, and Samuel Walker were received into full connection and all elected to deacon's orders except Messrs. Le Vert and Harkey, who had been previously ordained and were now eligible to elder's orders. Eugene V. Levert, Jephthah Hughes, James A. Hughes, William H. Turnley, Leroy Massengale, Lewis S. Turner, Moses Perry, David Harkey, Mark Westmoreland, and Ewell Petty were elected elders, some of them having graduated to that order in part as local preachers. R. Griffin Christopher, formerly a member of the South Carolina Conference, and also Ewell Petty and Mark Westmoreland, in deacon's orders, formerly of the same Conference, were readmitted. Thomas Burpo was voted a supernumerary relation, and Meredith Renneau, Thomas C. Brown, Ashley Hewitt, Joseph McDowell, and Orsamus L. Nash were located at their own request. From the local ranks Jacob Denton, Obed Lovelady, Alfred Ghaskill, Jesse Ellis,

T. Bynum, Peter Foust, Isaac Taylor, John Scarborough, Jacob Taggart, Martin Simms, Humphrey Buck, and Leonard Tarrent were elected deacons, and Joshua Peavy and James Monnette elders. The preachers all stood remarkably well at this Conference both in their Christian and ministerial characters except some minor complaints against two or three probationers. Rev. William McMahan, of the Tennessee Conference, was again present as the active agent of Lagrange College, and everything was adjusted to give it all the prestige and efficiency in our power. Our female academies were also carefully considered, and every measure adopted to make them meet the expectations of the friends of liberal education.

A discussion was again had on the subject of Freemasonry. A committee was appointed to report, and the matter was several times brought before the Conference; but the anti-Masons, somehow, could not get at what they supposed was a concealed evil. The Conference had learned to let things prudently alone that did not properly come under its jurisdiction. Some of the members of the Conference had fallen in arrears with the Book Concern, in New York, and B. M. Drake and E. Hearn were appointed to correspond with the delinquents with a view to the early settlement of all outstanding accounts. It was made one of the imperious duties of preachers in charge of circuits and stations to supply all the societies with our Church publications, and they were often mistaken, in ordering books, as to the number they could sell. When Conference came, they were expected to pay the inevitable Book Committee

whether the books were sold or not. The plan of circulating our Church literature has been revised several times, but has not yet gained the efficiency which its importance demands. Hitherto the itinerant preachers have been depended upon almost exclusively to circulate the Church literature, and it has been one of their most embarrassing and unthankful duties. The individual Churches ought to take hold of this matter and see that their immediate neighborhood is well supplied with denominational books and periodicals.

Through the hands of Mrs. Caroline Matilda Thayer we again received a handsome donation from the Female Assistance Society at Washington, Miss. There were but few changes made in the plan of the work at this Conference. La Fourche Mission, which had been left two years to be supplied, was dropped from the list of appointments. St. Joseph is not in the list of appointments in the General Minutes, but is incidentally mentioned in the Journal. Another new charge was formed from the southern end of the old Tuscaloosa Circuit mostly in Green County, including Greensboro, and was called Green. R. Griffin Christopher was preacher in charge. William Stephenson was continued on the Louisiana District, with six young men on his five circuits. Prospects were brightening west of the Mississippi. In the Washington District William M. Curtis was stationed in Natchez and William V. Douglass in New Orleans. The growth of the Church was preceptible but slow in New Orleans, and embarrassed with many difficulties. For several years there was rather a falling off in the

number of white members, ranging from forty-six in 1830 to sixty-four in 1832 and forty-eight in 1836. There was considerable increase in the colored membership. In the Bayou Pierre District Benjamin M. Drake, who was still President of the Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, was appointed pastor of the Church in Port Gibson, which was thirty-eight miles distant, with the three forks of Coles Creek without bridges intervening. This was a hard appointment both on the pastor and congregation, for he could only preach them one sermon on the Sabbath, and they were deprived of his presence and pastoral labors the remainder of the week. The Church could not prosper under these unpropitious circumstances.

The little mission at Lake Providence had assumed the proportions of a large circuit, taking in various settlements above and below the Lake in Louisiana, crossing over to Washington County, Miss., and embracing the new settlements on Lake Washington. A number of families of Methodist proclivities, including the Worthingtons, Shelbys, Princes, and others, had located near the Lake and gave the missionary preacher a cordial welcome. Washington Ford, one of the three preacher sons of Rev. John Ford, of Pearl River, was in charge of Lake Providence Mission, and, with the liberal assistance of Harbord Hood, inaugurated the first camp meeting ever held on Lake Providence. In company with that most congenial man and minister, John Lane, of Vicksburg, we had the pleasure of attending this primitive camp meeting. The tenters were few, but the provision was bountiful. Some of the early settlers

in that wilderness were rather shy at first of such a novelty as a camp meeting, but they soon seemed quite at home on the camp ground. We had a profitable camp meeting. The bottom lands were being rapidly occupied by wealthy cotton planters, which soon filled the country with a large colored population. They were permitted to attend camp meeting, especially at night and on the Sabbath. The negroes have strong, melodious voices, and the crowds attending the camp meeting soon caught the songs and choruses and enlivened the midnight hours with a vast swell of the most enrapturing Church music. It could not but make the pious mind think of the heavenly choir. The young city of Vicksburg was detached from Warren Circuit and made a station. The presiding elder supplied it by the employment of John O. T. Hawkins, who was now local and engaged in secular business at Vicksburg. After an absence of two years, the writer was reappointed to Warren Circuit. The two camp meetings, one at Wren's Camp Ground and the other at Lums, were gracious seasons. During the year there was a large ingathering in the vicinity of the Lower Yazoo Bluffs, which resulted in building a church near Milldale, long known as Baker's Chapel, in honor of Rev. Dr. Job M. Baker, who lived near and took a very active and liberal part in the erection of the chapel and in the edification of the spiritual Church. The work of grace also spread extensively in the southern part of the county on the waters of Bogue de Shay. "The Warren Fire Company" was still in full blast. Numbers who had been brought to Christ two years before, both men

and women, were now pillars in the Church, taking an active part in the class and prayer meetings and all other assemblies for advancing the kingdom of Christ. It is joyful to know that most of them were faithful unto death, and left the sweet assurance that they were numbered with the heirs of eternal salvation.

James H. Mellard was continued on the Alabama District, which now contained ten pastoral charges, taking in the whole breadth of Southern Alabama and extending westward in Mississippi to include Leaf River Circuit. This was an ample territory for one man. Mr. Mellard was light, lithe, active, and indomitable. Benjamin A. Houghton was stationed in Mobile, which was slowly becoming a self-sustaining work, though still numbered among the missions. The Church at this time contained fifty-nine white and one hundred and ninety-eight colored members. Robert D. Smith was withdrawn from the Choctaw Mission and stationed in Montgomery, with a membership of twenty-four white and thirty-two colored members, which increased during the year to sixty-four white and thirty-five colored members. Mr. Smith was a very earnest worker among the people of his charge. He was tall and spare, of good appearance and courtly manners, an agreeable conversationalist, and a fluent preacher. His manner was sententious, didactic, and earnest, but not boisterous. He was now one of the rising young men of our Conference.

The name of Cahawba District was changed to Black Warrior, and Robert L. Kennon appointed presiding elder. Robert L. Walker was stationed

in the city of Tuscaloosa. Alexander Talley was continued the superintendent of the Choctaw Mission, with Moses Perry and John Cotton as colleagues. The unsettled condition of the Nation cast quite a shadow over our prospects, and the statistics show a diminished membership. William Winans, being still too feeble to do effective work, was continued Conference Agent for raising funds for missionary and other Church purposes, and Ebenezer Hearn was appointed Agent for Lagrange College. The preachers were generally pleased with their appointments, and there was now a fine working force in the three States. As the honored name of Ashley Hewitt by his voluntary location now disappears forever from the roll of the itinerancy, it is due to his memory and faithful and long-continued labors as a traveling preacher to record a few additional facts about him and his family. Ashley Hewitt was admitted into the South Carolina Conference, held at Columbia December 22, 1810, and after traveling five years in that Conference came as a missionary to Mississippi. Of the fifteen years spent in active work, twelve were spent in Western Louisiana, where, from long rides, constant exposure, and frequent preaching his constitution became hopelessly prostrated. He should have been placed on the honored roll of worn-out preachers for the remainder of his life. The Mississippi Conference, as in the case of Thomas Owens and a few other faithful itinerants, ought to have refused to vote a location to such a man as Ashley Hewitt and kept him among them until removed by death and then honored his name and labors with a suitable mem-

oir in the General Minutes. In person Mr. Hewitt was tall and spare, light-complexioned, full, mild blue eyes, large mouth, and protruding lips; his countenance was indicative of repose and benevolence and his general characteristic was that of unoffending harmlessness. In the pulpit he stood very erect; his voice was loud and smooth and his enunciation remarkably distinct. His gestures were slow and moderate. He had a way of seldom looking into the faces of his congregation, but around the walls just above their heads. His sermons were well planned and his different points well made. His variety of sermons was not extensive, and he often preached the same sermon almost precisely in the same words. There was an unction about his slow, clear, and emphatic preaching that gave it influence over the hearts of his hearers. In 1826, at a little camp meeting in the pine hills, about fifteen miles west of Monroe, in Washita Parish, La., the first ever held in that region, Mr. Hewitt preached at eleven o'clock on Sabbath morning. He was in feeble health; but as he proceeded in his clear, deliberate, and emphatic style, standing very erect and looking around on the trees above the heads of his auditors, the tide of religious feeling silently rose higher and higher until it became almost unbearable. After the service, Dr. Talley was asked how he enjoyed the sermon. "O," said he, "it liked to have killed me! My earthen vessel was so full it was ready to break and let my enraptured soul fly away toward heaven." Many could bear testimony to the wondrous words of grace spoken that day, so deliberately that one could feast on each sentence before being hurried on to another.

Mr. Hewitt determined to try the hills of Warren County, Miss. His old friend and fellow-laborer, Rev. John Lane, supplied him with land near Vicksburg, and assisted him in building houses for the comfort of his family. In 1829 and 1830 he had charge of Warren Circuit, but his health continued to fail until he lost all hope of ever being able to do effective work as an itinerant preacher. He did not attend our late Conference, but sent a simple request to be given a location, which was granted. Feeling that his end was drawing near, he decided to take his family back to their old home in the Prairie Mer Rouge. Here, by industry and economy, he lived a few years in comfort.

There is a beautiful story confirmatory of the power of Christian faith connected with the death of Miss Nancy Hewitt, his oldest daughter, which occurred a short time before his own death. She was a lovely girl just blooming into mature womanhood. Her complexion was fair, and both her physical and mental endowments resembled those of her father. She had always been a very innocent child, and especially after she joined the Church was blameless in her outward deportment, but she lived without the witness of her acceptance in Christ until near her death. This was a source of affliction to her father, especially after he saw she was marked for an early grave. Mr. Hewitt felt that it would embitter all his after life for his beloved daughter to die without leaving an evidence of her acceptance in Christ. Being greatly exercised about her, he rose in the stillness of the night and, upon bended knees, gave himself to prayer, but no responsive answer came. Aft-

er resting his feeble body a short time, he arose again and prayed a second time, but the answer was not yet. After a short rest, he arose and prayed a third time. He now felt that spirit of prayer which borders on agony, and he prayed more earnestly than ever. It was now that the clouds dispersed and faith that Nancy would obtain a bright assurance of her acceptance before death pervaded his whole being. The father and daughter both rapidly declined, and soon became so feeble that they could not visit each other's room. Nancy was going first. Mrs. Hewitt entered his room and announced that Nancy was dying. "Has she professed to find peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?" inquired Mr. Hewitt. The question was answered negatively, and Mr. Hewitt replied: "Then she will not die yet. I could as soon doubt my own Christian experience as to doubt that she will have a bright evidence of the forgiveness of all her sins before she leaves us. Return to her room and remain with her." In a short time Mrs. Hewitt returned with the sad announcement that Nancy was really dead. Mr. Hewitt inquired with emphasis: "Did she profess to have an assurance of her salvation?" Mrs. Hewitt replied: "She said nothing about it." "Then," said Mr. Hewitt, "she is not dead. God will not disappoint my faith and let my hope be lost." "O, Mr. Hewitt," replied the weeping mother, "could you see her as I saw her just now, you too would believe her dead!" The functions of life were evidently suspended for a few moments. While all around was sorrow and tears, her aunt, Mrs. Knox, discovered a slight motion of her lips, as though she were trying to say

something; and, putting her ear close to her mouth, heard her say in almost inaudible whispers, "O Jesus, Jesus! sweet Jesus! Thou art come! I am so happy! so happy! Glory be to God!" and other expressions of holy triumph. She rallied under the rapturous excitement, had the family called together, requested the presence of the servants, and "witnessed a good confession" before all, assuring them of her salvation and exhorting them all to meet her in heaven. Her strength and voice kept up astonishingly until her work was done, and then she began to sink rapidly. "Aunt Knox," said she, "I am so sleepy I can scarcely keep my eyes open; but I am afraid to go to sleep lest I should lose my happy feelings and my bright evidence of my acceptance in Christ." Her aunt assured her that her fears were groundless; that Jesus would take care of her as well in sleep as when awake. She then closed her eyes and quietly slept in Jesus. When these facts were, without exaggeration, related to Bishop Soule, he said: "Brother Hewitt's faith in that case ought to be recorded for the benefit of the Church." Mr. Hewitt did not long survive his daughter, and his calm and peaceful death was in keeping with his holy and useful life. He was buried in the Prairie Mer Rouge, near where he died. One of his daughters subsequently married Rev. Jephthah Hughes, of our Conference.

Two most valuable and promising young ministers died this year: John P. Haney and James A. Hughes. Of Mr. Haney we have written heretofore. Mr. Hughes was a native of Tennessee. While quite young his parents moved to Alabama. Here he was

converted in his youth; and feeling it his duty to preach the gospel, he was received on trial into our Conference December 18, 1826. His character as an itinerant preacher was remarkably consistent from the beginning. Where he was best known he was most highly appreciated. He spent his first and fourth years on the Alabama Circuit, and his second and third on the Conecuh Circuit. In his fifth year he was appointed to Washington, Miss., with several country Churches connected with the town. By this time his rapidly improving talents had made him quite conspicuous. He had a fine person of medium size, was polished in his intercourse with society, very studious, and deeply pious. Having no family, he made his headquarters with the family of John W. Bryan, near Washington, where he was esteemed and treated with the affection of a son. In the summer he left Washington a few weeks to attend a camp meeting on Roundaway Bayou, in the Swamp, and another at Lum's Camp Ground. At both these meetings he seemed to be taking an elevated stand among his colaborers on account of his clear head, warm heart, and commanding delivery in the pulpit. At the camp meeting, at Lum's, in Warren County, he received a great spiritual blessing, and spoke in glowing terms of his prospect of getting to heaven. Was this the anointing he received for his burial? With a light and happy heart he returned to his work at Washington, and in a few days was smitten with a virulent fever, which proved to be entirely unmanageable. His sufferings were severe, but of only a few days' duration. He bore them patiently and died in great peace in the twenty-fourth year of

his age. He was buried in the private cemetery of Mr. Bryan.

Within the past decade Rev. William James appeared on the stage of Methodism in Wilkinson County, Miss., and deserves a niche in this history. His parents were South Carolinians, and removed from Williamsburg District in 1811 and settled in Wilkinson County, Mississippi Territory. The father was not a member of any Church; the mother was a Presbyterian, and brought up her children according to the rules and usages of that Church. About 1821 or 1822 William James attended the camp meeting at Bethel as an idle spectator, and went away quite disgusted with what seemed to him disorder and confusion. He returned to his home, on the waters of Percy's Creek, near Fort Adams, and there the Lord soon found a way to his heart without the intervention of a camp meeting. As soon as he became awakened to a sense of his guilt he found the warm sympathy of the Methodists very soothing to his penitent heart, and at once began to seek their society. Meredith Renneau was on Wilkinson Circuit in 1823, and on the 23d of June received him into the Church on probation. It was not long before he was converted, and from that day forth religion seemed to pervade his whole being. The forms of family religion were promptly established in his household. In his Church relations all that he seemed anxious to know was what he had to be and to do in order to become a good Methodist Christian. William James looked on his conversion as the greatest event of his life. He felt that religion was a proper theme to talk about, and

everywhere—in private circles, in class and prayer meetings, in love feasts, and in the altar among the penitents—his voice was heard in melting tones, telling what great things the Lord had done for him and affectionately recommending religion to others. It was thought best to give him license to exhort; but this privilege was not commensurate with his zeal, and he was soon licensed to preach and in due course graduated to deacon's and elder's orders as a local preacher. As a minister he was not an eloquent declaimer or profound theologian, but he could tell people how to get religion and live in the enjoyment of it afterwards. He had settled in the vicinity of Bethel and became one of the permanent patrons of the annual encampment. He thought a good camp meeting the best earthly representative of heaven. When any repairs or additions were needed for the comfort of the vast concourse that assembled there, he was always ready, with all his effective force, to assist in making them. About 1842 the patrons of Bethel Camp Ground determined to build a shed of sufficient capacity to protect the thousands that assembled there from the sun and rain. A large amount of timber had to be prepared and brought together for the vast frame, and the superstructure erected and covered within a short period. Most of the wealthy planters sent what hands they could spare for a few days, and then, considering that they had done their part, withdrew them; but William James commenced with the first with all his effective force and continued his labors from day to day until the last board was nailed on the roof. About the going down of the sun of the

evening the camp meeting services were to commence and the vast structure was to be solemnly dedicated to the worship of God he dropped from the low eve to the ground, with his usual ejaculation of "Bless God! the shed is done." A few moments spent in adjusting his wardrobe and refreshing the outer man at the supper table, and he was fully ready to commence the spiritual campaign of the meeting. William James was a happy Christian. He always seemed to have a rich blessing in his soul. One of the most familiar sounds at Bethel was his clear, sonorous voice ringing out from the early dawn to the midnight hour in prayer and praise. He was just as much of a Christian at home and in private life among his neighbors. He was a man of great purity, simplicity, and zeal. He never seemed to hesitate on the threshold of duty, and he discharged his domestic and social religious duties with so much ease and naturalness that his promptness gave no offense. The accession of Mr. James to the Methodist Episcopal Church was ultimately followed by all his brothers and sisters except his brother John, who died in communion with the Presbyterian Church. One of his brothers, James Alexander James, also became a local preacher, and in fervent piety, talents, and zeal very much resembled his elder brother. Alexander James sometimes itinerated in Yazoo County, where he spent the latter years of his life. William James was married three times—the first time to Miss Mary Reid, who died the year after he joined the Church. His second marriage was to Miss Margaret Scott. The four children of his first marriage all died

in infancy. Of the seven of his second marriage, six attained to manhood and womanhood and all embraced religion early in life. One of his daughters married Rev. Joseph D. Newsom, then of the Mississippi but now of the North Mississippi Conference. For seventeen years did this excellent lady bear the burdens and inconveniences of the itinerancy, until a most triumphant death ended her toils and sorrows on earth. Mr. Newsom married a sister of his deceased wife, who is now holding up his hands in the work of the Lord. Mr. James's third marriage was to Miss Anna Taylor, a lady every way worthy and well qualified to be the wife of such a man. Mr. James lived through the ill-omened war of secession, saw his country ruined, his favorite camp ground at Bethel fall into disuse for the want of men and means to keep it up, and then was called home in peace and triumph. He died April 9, 1865, aged sixty-eight years, forty-two of which he had spent in the Church, a spiritual, happy, and useful local preacher.

The statistics of this year give twelve thousand nine hundred and four white, five thousand one hundred and eighty-one colored, one thousand Choctaws reported from the old Nation, and three hundred and twelve from their new home in the West. This gave an increase of nine hundred and fifty-seven white and eight hundred and nineteen colored members over last year.

CHAPTER X.

1831.

THE Mississippi Conference assembled at Woodville, Miss., November 30, 1831. Bishop Roberts was present, and presided to the great satisfaction of the Conference. William M. Curtis was elected Secretary, and it is pleasant to read his legible penmanship. Bishop Roberts now had the appearance of extreme old age with a worn-out constitution. Still necessity compelled him to perform most of his episcopal tours on horseback. He was a great favorite with the Mississippi Conference. The preachers revered and loved him as a father, and now realized that the day was not distant when they should see his venerable face no more on earth.

The Conference was opened and organized in the usual form, and proceeded to business. A full attendance of the members was present both from the extreme east and west. This was the time to elect delegates to the General Conference of 1832; and the contemplated division of our ample territory into two Conferences made it necessary for as many of the members as could to be present. For the first time the venerable William Stephenson, the great frontiersman, was present. Those who had not seen him before were deeply impressed with his unaffected Christian simplicity and the spiritual power that attended him in all his ministerial exer-

cises. Mr. Winans was in very feeble health, and the strong man was rapidly succumbing to the onerous labors of the itinerancy. Mr. Winans never learned to favor himself in the pulpit. When he became fully interested in his subject, he would preach as though he never expected to preach again. He was too feeble during Conference to perform the usual amount of labor required of him at our annual sessions.

Twenty were admitted on trial at this Conference. Enoch N. Talley, James P. Stephenson, William Leggett, Hazlewood B. Farish, Ransom J. Jones, John Foust, John Jackson, Paul F. Stearns, Charles J. Carney, Absalom Gavin, William Winans Oakchiah (native Choctaw), James Watson, Samuel Graves, Gabriel M. Hubert, Seymour B. Sawyer, James R. West, Samuel Creswell, Sidney S. Squires, Stephen Herrin, and Andrew Adams. Rev. Ransom J. Jones, Sr., was set off with the Alabama Conference, where he traveled four years and then asked for a short location, but it continued nearly twenty years. He was a very active, acceptable, and useful local preacher, provided well for his household, and brought up a lovely, intelligent, and useful family of children. Having settled at an early day in the new county of Jasper, Miss., he was readmitted into the Mississippi Conference in December, 1855, and continued to labor zealously and successfully until his death, March 23, 1872. He left three itinerant preachers in his immediate family: Rev. Kenneth A. Jones, of the North Mississippi Conference; Rev. Ransom J. Jones and Rev. Edwin H. Mounger (a son-in-law), of the Mississippi Conference. William Winans

Oakchiah was the first Choctaw admitted into the itinerancy. He proved to be a valuable minister in his tribe. His Indian name was simply Oakchiah, but he took the name of William Winans as his Christian name. Seymour B. Sawyer came from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He fell into the Alabama division, and until his early death proved to be one of their most talented and useful ministers. A large proportion of the twenty admissions proved to be very valuable acquisitions. William B. Cobb, Jacob Segrist, and William Howie were discontinued; thirteen were continued on trial; nine were received into full connection and elected to deacon's orders; nine were elected elders. John C. Burruss, John O. T. Hawkins, Orsamus L. Nash, and Joseph McDowell were readmitted. Isaac V. Enochs, Peter James, Jephthah Hughes, and Thomas Burpo located. Lewis S. Turner and Benjamin B. Smith were declared supernumerary, and David Harky, Le Roy Massengale, and Thomas Owens were superannuated. From the local ranks Thomas Lynch, John Foust, William H. McCurdy, Blanton P. Box, William K. Whittington, and John H. Mallory were elected deacons, and Elijah Gentry elder.

The usual routine business of an Annual Conference was attended to with deliberation and conscientious care. Bishop Roberts would not permit anything to be done with carelessness. The examination of character passed off smoothly except in one or two instances. The session was prolonged to the tenth day on account of some new and important matters that came up for discussion and adoption.

The most observing and experienced members of

the Conference had long felt the necessity of revising and extending the course of study for the undergraduates to four years. The course of study had to be accomplished in two years or before admission to full connection, with only one examination at the end of the second year, and was a burden too grievous to be borne by most young men entering the ministry. The bishops were required themselves or by committee at each Annual Conference "to point out a course of study for candidates for the ministry," and the presiding elders were to see that each undergraduate in their charges had a copy of the course. This old course of study embraced every doctrine in the whole range of theology from the fall of man to the final awards of eternity, with a critical knowledge of controverted doctrines. It embraced also a knowledge of sacred and profane history, of the forms of Church government, especially the Methodists, with all literature necessary to qualify a man to speak and write correctly. To acquire this huge mass of knowledge, almost every standard work in our denominational literature was named to be read or kept as a book of reference. It was utterly impossible to travel a circuit from two to four hundred miles round, preaching almost every day in the week, and even read hastily one-fourth of the books prescribed in two years. Most young men would select a few books on doctrinal, experimental, and practical Christianity and confine their studies to them. The result of this course of study was that the committees appointed at each Annual Conference to examine the undergraduates to be received into full connection would not exam-

ine them on the books named in the course, but give them a superficial examination on doctrines and biblical history and Church government. If they passed a fair examination on these points, they were recommended for full connection and deacon's orders, and thereafter left to select and pursue their own course of study, with no future examinations to stimulate their diligence.

B. M. Drake offered a resolution, which was adopted, requesting Bishop Roberts "to appoint a committee to revise the course of study for probationers." The Bishop appointed Robert L. Kennon, Benjamin M. Drake, and William V. Douglass. Their report, on motion of William Winans, was adopted, and two hundred copies required to be printed and distributed among the preachers. On the 8th of May, at the General Conference held in Philadelphia, Benjamin M. Drake, seconded by Nathan Bangs, of New York, offered the substance of this report for the adoption of the General Conference. It was adopted; and with some small alterations and amendments has been the law of the Church on the course of study ever since. This revision and extension of the course of study to four years has been the means of training up in the Mississippi Conference a better-educated class of ministers. Some of our ministers were becoming remiss in the administration of discipline, and the Church was falling away from its primitive purity as a consequence. This suggested the idea of appointing a committee "on the state of the itinerancy." The committee consisted of Robert L. Kennon, William Stephenson, Benjamin M. Drake, James H. Mellard, and Wil-

liam Winans. This committee made an able report, urging a return to first principles in the administration of discipline, and recommending the immediate reading of the "Report of the Committee of Safety," adopted by the General Conference of 1816, which was done in a solemn and impressive manner. The discussion of this subject, with the accompanying remarks of the venerable Bishop, had a restoring influence on the preachers. Under the present ratio of representation the General Conference was becoming too large for economy and the dispatch of business, and William Winans offered a resolution, which was adopted, recommending the ensuing General Conference to reduce the ratio of representation. This resolution went to the General Conference, was adopted in substance, and after receiving a three-fourths vote of all the Annual Conferences became a law of the Church.

Mr. Winans offered a resolution recommending the General Conference so to change the Proviso at the close of the Restrictive Rules that a two-thirds vote of the General Conference and a three-fourths vote of all the Annual Conferences should suffice to alter any of the Restrictive Rules except the first. This resolution passed the General Conference by a legal majority; and being sent down to the Annual Conferences, it was concurred in by a three-fourths majority and thenceforth became a law of the Church. The delegates to the ensuing General Conference—all elected on the first ballot—were William Winans, Robert L. Kennon, Thomas Griffin, Ebenezer Hearn, Benjamin M. Drake, Robert L. Walker, and William M. Curtis. The four reserve delegates were

James H. Mellard, Joseph McDowell, Thomas Clinton, and John C. Burruss. This had already become a usage in many of the Conferences; and though it was not authorized by any enacted law, it met the approval of the bishops and the Annual Conferences. The usage is now universal.

Certain resolutions from the Ohio Conference were submitted for concurrence and coöperation, but the Journal gives no intimation of their import. A committee was appointed to consider and report on them. The report was against concurrence and coöperation, and the Conference agreed with the committee. From the connection in which these resolutions are in the Journal, they contained a request to coöperate with the Ohio Conference and other Conferences in the West in building up the Western Branch of the Book Concern at Cincinnati. During all low stages of water in the Ohio we could obtain books more promptly from New York, by way of the ocean and gulf to New Orleans, than from the Western Branch at Cincinnati. Our greatest objection to coöperation grew out of a desire to have a book depository established in New Orleans. In connection with the disposal of the Ohio resolutions a resolution was passed instructing the delegates to the General Conference "to request the establishment in New Orleans of a Branch of the General Book Concern." The General Conference concurred and established a book depository in New Orleans, and appointed William M. Curtis Agent. This book depository was a convenience to the Conference; and useful to the country; but the patronage was not sufficient to justify its continu-

ance, and in a few years it was closed. Though its history was short, it was the initial step toward the establishment of our present flourishing depository, at 112 Camp Street, New Orleans.

Lagrange College received due attention from the Conference, and Joseph McDowell was appointed Agent to travel in the interest of the college.

The time had come when the convenience of the preachers and the interests of the Church demanded a division of the large territory into two Conferences. We approached this subject with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow—joy on account of that prosperity with which the Lord had favored us until it became necessary to divide our accumulated forces into two bands, and sorrow because it implied the final earthly separation of brethren who loved each other as David and Jonathan. Bishop Roberts was requested by a unanimous resolution to sanction the formation of a new Conference to be called Alabama. A committee was appointed to fix the boundary line between the two Conferences. The Alabamians, led by Dr. Kennon, insisted that, as the Tennesseans had a part of their State in their Conference and the Mississippians would have all of Louisiana in theirs, they ought to have a portion of Eastern Mississippi in the Alabama Conference. This was consented to reluctantly by the Mississippi preachers, as they wished the State line to be the boundary between the two Conferences, believing that the day was not very distant when another new Conference would be formed out of our territory west of the Mississippi River. “The dividing ridge between Pearl and Leaf Rivers, and thence with the said ridge between the

waters of the Mississippi and Tombigbee Rivers to the Tennessee line," was at first established as the boundary line; but at the General Conference of 1836 it was readjusted so as to give the Alabamians one tier of counties on the eastern border of Mississippi. This was never satisfactory to the Mississippi Conference, especially after we set off the Louisiana Conference and consented to give North Mississippi to assist in forming the Memphis Conference. No General Conference passed from 1836 to 1870 that a fruitless effort was not made to change the boundary to the State line. In 1870, in arranging for two Conferences to embrace the entire State of Alabama and two others the entire State of Mississippi, the adoption of the State line between Alabama and Mississippi as the boundary between the four Conferences came about naturally. This gave to each of the Mississippi Conferences a goodly number of Alabama preachers, who had settled their families in the State, and also added a considerable membership. Certain that the General Conference would confirm the division into two Conferences, Vicksburg was selected as the place of meeting for the Mississippi and Tuscaloosa for the Alabama Conference. This division gave to the Alabama Conference thirty-eight traveling preachers and eight thousand one hundred and ninety-six white and two thousand seven hundred and seventy colored members; and to the Mississippi Conference forty-two traveling preachers and six thousand three hundred and eighty white, two thousand six hundred and forty-five colored, and seven hundred and one Indian members. Bishop Roberts gave the time for

holding the next Mississippi Conference as the 13th of December, 1832, and that of Alabama as November 27, 1832. After the usual vote of thanks to the citizens for their hospitality to the Baptist brethren for the use of their church to hold our sessions in, and to Mr. Chisholm for gratuitous printing, the Conference united with unusual emotion in singing the closing hymn, commencing:

"And let our bodies part,
To different climes repair;
Inseparably joined in heart
The friends of Jesus are."

After prayer, Bishop Roberts gave us a very appropriate and feeling valedictory. About the close of Conference there was a fall of snow succeeded by a heavy freeze. This made the homeward trip on horseback somewhat disagreeable; but, accustomed to such, the preachers braved the weather heroically. Western Louisiana was divided into two districts, large in territory, but small in pastoral charges. William H. Turnley was appointed in charge of Louisiana District and William Stephenson of Monroe. Two new circuits were added to the Louisiana District, called Quelquesne and Sabine, with John Bilbo on the first and Preston Cooper on the second. Lake Providence was included in the Monroe District, with Daniel Sears in charge, and Lake St. Joseph, with Joseph P. Snead in charge. This was found to be a bad arrangement, for it was easier to reach those two circuits from the east by crossing the Mississippi River than from the west by crossing forty miles of an annually inundated swamp.

The former Washington and Bayou Pierre Districts were so divided as to make the New Orleans, Washington, and Yazoo Districts, with Barnabas Pipkin in charge of the first, Thomas Clinton the second, and Thomas Griffin the third. In the New Orleans District two new circuits appear: St. Helena, taken from the southern portion of the old Amite Circuit, and Washington, which took the place of the former St. Tammany Circuit. Lafourche Mission was restored to the list, and Benjamin F. Coxe appointed in charge. Orsamus L. Nash was stationed in New Orleans. In the Washington District William M. Curtis was stationed in Natchez and William V. Douglass in Port Gibson. In the Yazoo District John O. T. Hawkins was stationed in Vicksburg, and a new work was laid off called Clinton, and left to be supplied by Thomas Ford. Alexander Talley was appointed Superintendent of the Choctaw Mission in the West, with William W. Oakchiah and Moses Perry as colleagues. William Winans and John I. E. Byrd were left without appointments at their own request, and John C. Burruss was appointed Agent for the American Colonization Society.

In Alabama the Alabama and Black Warrior Districts were so divided as to make the Tombigbee, Alabama, Black Warrior, and Tuscaloosa Districts, with Ebenezer Hearn on the first, James H. Mellard on the second, Robert L. Kennon on the third, and Eugene V. Le Vert on the fourth. Robert D. Smith was stationed in Mobile, Seymour B. Sawyer in Montgomery, and Robert L. Walker in Tuscaloosa. In the Alabama District a new circuit appears called

Blount. It lay mostly in Blount County, about seventy or eighty miles northeast of Tuscaloosa, and was composed in part of territory formerly in Jones's Valley Circuit. Jesse Ellis was its first pastor.

Long and persistent were the efforts of the Mississippi Conference to establish Christianity in Mobile; the preachers helped by small sums from their own limited salaries and collections from the people of their charges in building a small church. Methodist preaching was popular, and this little house was soon crowded beyond its capacity. The Church was too poor to pull it down and build a larger, so they concluded to take out one side and make a considerable enlargement to the house. In a short time this addition was filled to overflowing, and a similar addition was made on the opposite side of the house. This old wooden house, with its additions, had gradually assumed the name of the "Old Hive;" and when, with the second addition, it failed to accommodate the ever-increasing congregation, the brethren decided it was time for the "Old Hive" to swarm. Since then many vigorous colonies have swarmed out all over the city and its environs. Joseph McDowell was readmitted at this Conference, but fell into the Alabama Conference. He continued to be respected and beloved by the Church as a minister until in a good old age he died, in Rankin County, Miss.

The statistics show an increase in the whole Conference (as it was before division) of one thousand five hundred and ninety-nine white and two hundred and thirty colored members, but a decrease of six hundred and eleven Choctaws.

CHAPTER XI.

1832.

THE Mississippi Conference met in the city of Vicksburg on Wednesday, November 21, 1832. Bishop James O. Andrew did not reach Vicksburg until late Saturday afternoon. In those days a president *pro tem.* must be elected from the presiding elders, and there was no presiding elder present except Thomas Clinton. He presided admirably until the arrival of the Bishop. Dr. James P. Thomas was elected Secretary. Conference opened with only ten members present. The preachers, however, continued to arrive until most of them were present. Rev. John Lane was then living in his large home on the hill, and with his larger hospitality contributed much to the comfort and happiness of the Conference. He furnished a commodious room to hold the sessions in; furnished a room for the Bishop and his Council; boarded about sixteen preachers, besides keeping a well-furnished table for an indefinite number of transient visitors. The Conference was cordially and bountifully entertained.

The few members and patrons we had in Vicksburg had just finished their first church and had it ready for dedication. Mr. Winans had been requested to preach the dedicatory sermon, and it was one of his best and most powerful pulpit efforts. His text was, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer." The Conference adjourned to

attend the dedicatory services, and to redeem the time held an afternoon session.

John Lane had then been local several years from apparent necessity, and was a very industrious local preacher; but he was never satisfied with that relation. Soon after Conference opened Mr. Winans, without consulting Mr. Lane, moved for his readmission. He was readmitted, and for the next twenty-two or twenty-three years was excelled by no one in the service he rendered in the Mississippi Conference.

Two of our probationers, Absalom Gavin and Gabriel M. Hubert, had died at their posts the preceding year. John Dixon, Charles K. Marshall, Thomas Myers, Uriah Whatley, Cotman Methvin, and John G. Parker were admitted on trial; ten remained on trial; five were received into full connection; four traveling preachers were ordained deacons; six were ordained elders; William H. Turnley, Thomas Griffin, and Benjamin F. Coxe located; William V. Douglass was voted a supernumerary relation, and William Stephenson, William Winans, and John Ira E. Byrd were superannuated; John Lane and Thomas Nixon were readmitted.

From the local ranks Samuel Saxon, Arthur Ross, Samuel Lord, Harrison Bradford, Stephen Herrin, Sr., Charles Rawles, and Joseph Burns were elected deacons, and Dr. Henry Tooley, of Natchez, was elected elder.

An increasing spirit of piety pervaded the Conference. This was manifested by suitable resolutions on the subject of humiliation, prayer, and fasting. A resolution is found on the Journal of

this Conference "that the members meet twenty minutes before 9 A.M. in the Conference room for prayer." At some of the Conferences morning prayer meetings were held in the church at sunrise, and precious seasons of grace they often were to those who attended.

Such had been the leniency in regard to the old course of study that some of the undergraduates hardly thought that they must stand a good examination on each year of the revised course before they could be promoted to orders; but the refusal to elect several good brethren to deacon's orders because they could not undergo a satisfactory examination had a refreshing effect on the memories of the overgraduates as well as the undergraduates, for they had to review their former studies in order to be prepared to conduct their examinations intelligently.

The time had come to establish a male school of high grade within our own territory. We had contributed to the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham, Mass., Augusta College in Kentucky, and Lagrange College in North Alabama; now we must take the initial step toward creating a home institution. William Winans, Benjamin M. Drake, John Lane, John A. Cotton, and Dr. James P. Thomas were appointed a committee to consider and report on the propriety of establishing an academy under the control and patronage of the Conference. Mr. Winans's preference was for establishing male academies of high grade, to be used as preparatory departments to a future central college. Mr. Lane favored the establishment of a regular college at once. This committee did nothing more than to get up a general

discussion in favor of having a seminary of our own, but it was doubtless the first step toward the establishment of Centenary College at Jackson, La. The Conference continued its patronage to Lagrange College, and carefully nurtured Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss.

A more systematic plan in collecting funds for the various benevolent institutions of the Church had been adopted, and where the preachers in charge had properly interested themselves in making the collections, larger amounts than usual had been collected, especially for missionary and Sabbath school purposes. A goodly number of ladies had conscientious scruples against wearing jewelry after their accession to the Church, and sent what they had to the Conference. It was placed in the hands of William M. Curtis, to be disposed of at the market price in New Orleans, and the proceeds to be turned over to the Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The ladies of our Church in Natchez had formed themselves into a sewing society for the purpose of making up annually a box of clothing to be distributed among the most needy of the preachers. This was first introduced at this Conference, and was continued for many years. The presiding elders were appointed to distribute the clothing and return the thanks of the Conference to the benevolent donors. Our Conference unanimously concurred in the recommendation of the General Conference to reduce the ratio of delegates to the General Conference.

Having closed all routine business at an afternoon session on Tuesday, the Conference met in the church

at night to hear the Bishop's address and receive the appointments. The vigorous young Bishop made a first-class presiding officer. His text on the Sabbath was, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." In the conclusion of his sermon he gave a very lifelike and feeling description of the way in which innocent young men were often led to temporal and eternal ruin by associating with evil men. The congregation was greatly interested in his thrilling description of the way to ruin, and tears fell on every side. This Conference has generally loved and admired our bishops, but no man in the episcopacy ever stood higher in the affections and confidence of Mississippians than James O. Andrew. Among the older men he seemed naturally to take the place of dear old Bishop Roberts.

All the work in Western Louisiana west of the Mississippi Bottom was thrown into one district, called Louisiana, with Orsamus L. Nash as presiding elder. One new circuit was formed, called Boeuf Prairie. This circuit embraced Sicily Island and the settlements on the waters of Boeuf River as high up as Big Creek. Uriah Whatley was the first pastor of this circuit. It was in Boeuf Prairie that David M. Wiggins was brought up, and it was about this time that he was converted. He must have been brought up in the utmost ignorance of the Bible. His mother died when he was sixteen years old, and when he saw her put in the grave he thought that was the last of her, having yet no idea of the immortality of the soul.

A new circuit was formed in the New Orleans District, called Baton Rouge, which included the town

of that name, with the various settlements in East Baton Rouge Parish. Bevil Tabor was preacher in charge. Benjamin M. Drake was stationed in New Orleans, and James P. Thomas, M.D., took his place as President of Elizabeth Female Academy and also as preacher in charge of Adams Circuit. Lafourche Mission was continued with a membership of twenty white and twenty colored members. Daniel Sears was the missionary this year. John O. T. Hawkins was stationed in Natchez and Robert D. Smith in Vicksburg. Thomas Griffin having located, John Lane succeeded him on the Yazoo District. Two new circuits were formed in this district, called Rankin and Big Sand Mission, with Samuel Cresswell in charge of the former and James R. West the latter. Rankin Circuit embraced Rankin County, with portions of Simpson, Smith, and Scott Counties. This was all newly settled country, and the little communities were widely scattered. Big Sand Mission was named after an unimportant creek, but the mission extended through Holmes, Carroll, and Yalobusha Counties. Grenada was then a small village, called Pittsburg. The town of Raymond, the county seat of Hinds County, was added to Clinton and left to be supplied by Thomas Ford.

The writer was assigned this year to Lake Providence District, composed of Lake Providence and Lake St. Joseph Circuits, and an unorganized mission of no definite bounds, called Lake Bolivar, which he was to organize and fill himself. As the names of the circuits indicate, this work lay entirely in the Mississippi Bottom, subject to inundation except a few settlements on Bayou Macon Hills, and extended

from opposite Natchez to the mouth of the Arkansas River. John Dixon was appointed to Lake St. Joseph, and that indefatigable worker, Charles J. Carney, to Lake Providence. Lake Bolivar Mission was made up of wood choppers, raftsmen, hunters, and a few small planters who were settling on the margin of the river and adjacent lakes and bayous. During the high stage of water we would ascend to the upper part of the mission by steamboat, and then make our way back from house to house and from neighborhood to neighborhood on foot, on horseback, by canoe, skiff, flatboat, or any other water craft that would float downstream. There were several excellent families living on Lake Bolivar who assisted us in going from place to place. On our first trip we desired to make a thorough reconnoissance on both banks of the river as far down as Bachelor's Bend, where the town of Greenville now stands. Miles Fleetwood, who then owned the plantation at Bolivar Landing, procured passage for us on a peddling boat owned by a very clever young man by the name of Phillips, who had a Cherokee Indian to assist him in the navigation of his craft. This seemed a providential arrangement. Mr. Phillips would land near all the houses on either bank to sell his goods, which gave an opportunity of visiting nearly every family in the interests of our mission. He would tie up at night in the larger settlements, which gave us an opportunity of preaching. Our home was on the boat, where we did our cooking, eating, and sleeping. Our Cherokee was a jovial young man, and we enjoyed ourselves highly. When we parted we exchanged keepsakes, to be preserved

in memory of our friendship and pleasant voyage together.

This was indeed a hard mission; and yet it was made a blessing to us. Hitherto we had often been embarrassed by too much diffidence among strangers; but here we had no alternative but to tell every one that we were a Methodist preacher and had come to preach the gospel in these destitute settlements. Many of them twenty years old had never heard a sermon nor witnessed any public act of religious worship. We established eight or ten regular preaching places in private houses and formed a number of small societies. Hitherto we had always seemed to be on the track of some older preacher, especially Tommy Owens, whether we preached in Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana; but this time we were where we had no predecessor and where a preacher had never before made a track. Though reared in the hills almost in sight of the Mississippi River, we never could spend a summer in the bottom lands without attacks of fever. This summer they commenced in July; and we had repeated relapses until Conference.

Dr. Alexander Talley was continued the Superintendent of the Choctaw Mission West, with Thomas Myers, William W Oakchiah, and Moses Perry as colleagues. By special request, Rev. Francis A. Owen, late of the Tennessee Conference, was appointed our agent for Lagrange College, and John C. Burruss was continued in the agency of the American Colonization Society. Thomas Griffin was granted a location at his own request. He opened a large farm on the head waters of Doak's Creek, in

Madison County, where he contributed liberally of his time, labor, and money in building up and sustaining Pleasant Grove Church and Camp Ground. He was greatly devoted to the doctrines and discipline of the Church to the end of his life, and was a very zealous and laborious local elder. His health became more and more unsettled after his location. His assurance of heaven was strong, and his end was peace.

Among the early emigrants to Marion County east of Pearl River were several brothers by the name of Lewis, from North Carolina. They were moral, industrious, substantial young men, and made good citizens, but were not committed to any Church. It was fortunate for them that they settled in a community made up of devout and consistent Methodist Church members, conspicuous among whom were the Rawles, Regans, and others. In 1822 Quinea Lewis and his wife, Martha, united with the Church at Union Academy, under the pastorate of Thomas Griffin. Mrs. Lewis, whose maiden name was Spier, was the daughter of Baptist parents. When she became acquainted with the Methodists on Pearl River, she found among them a fervor in their piety and a consistency in their everyday deportment that corresponded with her views of religion, and she and her husband found a very congenial home in fellowship with them. They both became active members of the Church, Mr. Lewis always filling one or two subordinate offices and Mrs. Lewis being a wise counselor and gifted in prayer. They moved west of Pearl River, in the same county, and, in conjunction with Owen and Luke Conerly and their devoted and tal-

ented wives, built up the celebrated Water Hole Church and Camp Ground. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis afterwards moved to the waters of Magee's Creek, in Pike County, where they contributed their full share in building up Pine Grove Church. They finally settled near Holmesville, where, on Sabbath morning, January 31, 1875, Mrs. Lewis died in great peace, in the seventy-fourth year of her age and the fifty-third year of her profession of saving faith in Christ. She was one of the most exemplary Christians in all the relations of life we have ever known. Mr. Lewis still survives, in his eighty-first year, one of the acknowledged patriarchs of the Church. They brought up a very pious family of sons and daughters. They gave two of their sons, Henry P. and William B. Lewis, to the Mississippi Conference, and they are numbered among our most reliable and useful ministers.

William B. Lewis, Sr., another brother, served the Church many years as a local preacher of good and useful talents, and then entered into rest. Hon. Lemuel Lewis, a younger brother, joined the Church and was converted in 1831, and has, like the other members of the family, made a very substantial and useful layman for more than forty years. For more than a score of years he was Judge of the Probate Court of Marion County, and gave very general satisfaction. He has brought up thirteen children, and has the heartfelt joy of seeing them all in the Church.

In this old stronghold of Methodism in Marion County were the Rawles, Hope, Lenoir, and other Methodist families of the highest style of piety and

usefulness. Pompey, the celebrated negro preacher, belonged to the Rawles family before any of them had become religious. Pompey got among the Methodists, was converted, and became a very impulsive and noisy Christian. He could seldom hear an exhortation, sermon, or song without some outward demonstration. His old master did not like so much noise about religion, and threatened to punish Pompey if he did not keep more quiet. But Pompey's religion made him a humble, obedient, and faithful servant, and the family had confidence in the sincerity and integrity of the old African. A gentleman, in order to tease him, asked him one day "why he always made so much ado about religion." "'Cause," said Pompey, "it makes my soul so happy." "Makes your soul so happy?" replied the gentleman. "You simpleton, a negro has no soul." "Then, master, it makes my body happy, for I know I am happy," was the unanswerable argument of Pompey. Pompey was licensed to preach, and often preached with great acceptability both to the white and colored people. Pompey was faithful unto death. He lived to extreme old age, became nearly blind, and met with a quick but tragic death. They left him alone one day with the door so fastened that he could not get it open. The house caught fire and burned down with him in it.

In the summer of 1824, when we were licensed only to exhort, Ira Byrd requested us to attend to his appointments—one for each day in the week except Monday—until he should become able to resume his work. At Asbury Chapel, in the southwest corner of Jefferson County, we concluded, as we repre-

sented the preacher in charge, that we would give any who might wish to unite with the Church an opportunity to do so. A tall, comely-looking young woman arose and, after consulting a moment with her husband, came forward and offered herself as a candidate for Church membership. This person was Mrs. Elizabeth Osteen. She was the daughter of Rev. John Hannah, a Baptist minister, who, about 1797, suffered heavy persecution from the Spanish Catholics at Natchez, even to stripes and imprisonment, for his fidelity to the Protestant faith. When on his deathbed, many years subsequently, he called Elizabeth to his bedside and gave her his farewell advice and blessing, directing her attention particularly to the importance of an early consecration of herself to God. This made a deep and lasting impression on her mind. She never lost sight of the importance of becoming a true Christian. She was, in every true sense of the expression, one of the most influential and useful female members of the Church in the circuit where she lived. She often succeeded where others seemed to fail. A camp meeting was in progress at Center Camp Ground. They were having a cold time until late in the meeting. Mr. Drake, the presiding elder, proposed an open-air experience meeting. Several had spoken, rather by rote, when Elizabeth Osteen arose and began to rehearse in glowing terms what wonderful things the Lord had done for her. She became inspired with the Spirit of God; and, turning to the congregation, gave a powerful impromptu exhortation, called for mourners, and soon had the altar crowded. She died in 1864, and left a request

that the writer should preach her funeral sermon from 2 Timothy iv. 6-8.

Thomas S. Osteen, her husband, was her equal in personal piety, though never so demonstrative in religion as she was. In his quiet, upright course, he was one of our best and most useful Church members. He survived her a short time, but has also gone to his reward.

It was in 1818 that Mrs. Priscilla Shelby Jefferies, a cultivated, intelligent, and refined widow, with a family of two sons and four daughters, moved from Clarksville, Tenn., and, settling in the northeastern corner of Jefferson County, engaged in agricultural pursuits. Mrs. Jeffries was a Methodist, and more than forty years she was a pillar in the Church in the community where she lived. Her religious profession and practice were beautifully consistent. While by her kindness to the poor and illiterate she secured their confidence and won them to Christ, by her intelligence and high social qualities, combined with her sterling Christian integrity, she exerted a salutary influence in the upper grades of society in favor of the Church of her choice. Her house was constantly visited by the pastors of the Church, and her advice sought in regard to its increased prosperity. Her oldest son, Nathaniel Jefferies, with his amiable wife, united with the Church in 1829, and Mr. Jefferies was converted at the Caneridge Camp Meeting the same year. This amiable couple took a prominent stand in the Church of which they lived consistent and useful members over forty years. They acquired a large estate, brought up a large family "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and

then went peacefully down to their graves. Mr. Jefferies was liberal to the cause of Christ. About ten or twelve years before his death he invested one thousand and sixty dollars, at ten per cent interest, with the condition that the interest should be collected annually and paid to the pastor of the Church in Port Gibson, where most of his family held their membership, as Nat Jefferies's quarterage. The fund is still at interest, and Nat Jefferies's quarterage is still being promptly paid.. The various branches of the Jefferies family live in the vicinity of Port Gibson, and most of them still exhibit that intelligence and high-toned morality which was so conspicuous in their progenitors.

John A. Barnes and his wife were prominent, liberal, and useful members of the Church in Claiborne County in earlier days. Mr. Barnes was a native of Claiborne County, Miss. He was fairly educated for the time, and inherited property enough to give him a start in the world. He first married a Miss Harriet Willis, and settled on a farm about eight miles north of Port Gibson. About 1822 he and his young wife united with the Church and became earnest Christians. Mr. Barnes was a well-read man, of fine sense and accurate judgment, but not fluent in speech, which, at first, made it quite a trial to lead in prayer before strangers. After joining the Church, he promptly established family worship. Mr. Barnes improved his talents, and soon became an excellent prayer and class leader and a good voluntary exhorter. He excelled in visiting and praying with the sick, and was a very useful Christian

in his community. He took great interest in providing for the preachers, that they might go untrammelled to their work. His first wife died early in life, and he married, as his second wife, Miss Sarah L. Humphreys, the sister of our late Governor Benjamin G. Humphreys, of Mississippi. John A. Barnes was a quiet, straightforward, consistent political leader in his county, and while serving his constituents in the Legislature died at Jackson, February 28, 1833, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

Sarah L. Humphreys was converted in the days of her youth, and became a happy and zealous Christian as far back as 1822. In November, 1826, she was united in marriage with John A. Barnes, and but few more congenial spirits ever entered the bonds of holy matrimony. They first gave themselves to God, and then to each other by the will of God. They seemed to vie with each other which could do the most to advance the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth. After the death of Mr. Barnes, Mrs. Barnes remained on the homestead until her children grew to manhood and womanhood and went to homes of their own. Her house was the headquarters of Methodism in her community, where she entertained ministers of every grade with the most elegant Christian hospitality. After leaving her much-loved home in Claiborne County, she resided successively in Warren County, Miss., and in Madison and Claiborne Parishes, Louisiana, and finally with her son-in-law, Doctor James, in New Orleans, where, October 10, 1866, she died of yellow fever. Her end was full of peace and a sweet assurance of going to heaven.

Our written Journal gives an aggregate of five thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine white, two thousand four hundred and seventy-one colored, and seven hundred and one Indian members, making a grand total of nine thousand and thirty-one to commence with in our division of the Conference.

CHAPTER XII.

1833.

ACCORDING to appointment, the Conference met at Natchez, Miss., on Wednesday, November 13, 1833. Bishop John Emory presided. Hitherto our bishops had been men over the ordinary size. Bishops McKendree and Soule had large frames, while Bishops Roberts and George were inclined to corpulency; but Bishop Emory was of low stature and spare. Solomon says, "A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine;" and Bishop Emory's face was indicative of superior wisdom: As a presiding officer he was "very strict, but very mild." He proceeded with a great deal of caution in the revision of the work and the stationing of the preachers. "The first thing to be considered, brethren," said he, "is the interest of the work. Everything must be subservient to that; and next is care for the health, comfort, and support of the preachers." His style of preaching was different from that of the older bishops. He had not the gushing sympathy of Roberts and George, nor the natural eloquence of McKendree, nor the massive pulpit power of Soule; but his sermons were critically orthodox according to our Arminian creed, arranged with great precision, and delivered in clear and forcible language. While he preached in a natural tone of voice, at times he delivered certain truths

with great emphasis of feeling and gesture. His work as a bishop was short, and his death tragic. He was thrown from his buggy while alone, and died from the injuries received.

Dr. James P. Thomas was again elected Secretary, and after the usual preliminary business the Conference proceeded with the regular disciplinary questions. Anthony H. Holcomb, Henry Stephenson, Jonathan C. Jones, Jesse A. Guice, Bazell G. Puckett, Samuel L. L. Scott, Isaac Taylor, and A. D. Wooldridge were admitted on trial. At this Conference Henry Stephenson was admitted on trial the third time. He was an excellent man and minister, now quite beyond the middle of life, with a considerable family, which accounts for his repeatedly retiring from the itinerancy. Eight were continued on trial; six received into full connection and ordained deacons; three were ordained elders; John O. T. Hawkins, Samuel Walker, and William Leggett located; William Stephenson was declared supernumerary, Thomas Owens and William V. Douglass superannuated, and Daniel D. Brewer had died. Dr. Job M. Baker, late of the Missouri Conference, and Jonas Westerland were readmitted. Samuel Graves and Bevil Tabor were discontinued on account of ill health, and Andrew Adams for unchristian conduct. From the local ranks John P. Sprowl, John Garner, Andrew C. Kilpatrick, Friend McMahan, Gloucester Simpson (a free man of color), George Harrison, Thomas Green, Gabriel Blackburn, and William C. Gayle were elected deacons, and Anthony T. Simmons elder.

Rev. Francis A. Owen had been transferred from

the Tennessee Conference the previous year to travel as agent in the interests of Lagrange College. Mr. Hawkins having relinquished his pastorate in Natchez before the end of the year, Mr. Owen had been employed to fill the vacancy, and was found in charge of the station at the sitting of the Conference.

All the preliminary steps were taken and some expense incurred at this session in reference to the establishment of a manual labor school of high grade in our Conference. In order to have some denominational influence in a home college, A. D. Woolbridge, one of our probationers, was appointed to a professorship in Louisiana College, at Jackson, La. James P. Thomas was continued in the presidency of the Elizabeth Female Academy, which was still enjoying a good degree of prosperity. There occurred some trouble with two preachers at this Conference, Andrew Adams and John A. Cotton. Andrew Adams came from New York, bringing with him the usual evidences of Church membership. Professing to be called of God to preach, he was licensed, and in December, 1828, he was admitted on trial into our Conference, and after traveling two years was discontinued at his own request. After being local one year, he was admitted on trial again, and traveled two additional years. He married an amiable and pious widow. His preaching always seemed more intellectual than spiritual; still, he had conducted himself so prudently that his piety was not called into question.

At the present Conference documents were put into the hands of William Winans setting forth the fact that Mr. Adams had left a wife in New York

without any justifiable cause, and in order to avoid detection had changed his name from Amos to Andrew Adams. Mr. Winans showed the documents to Mr. Adams, who acknowledged the truth of the whole affair, but pleaded in justification of his course the known disloyalty of his wife. He was discontinued.

There were two John Cottons in our Conference. The older one died a bachelor at an advanced age. He was not remarkable for active zeal and pulpit power, but he was an intelligent, prudent, pious, and trustworthy man, and did some good work among us on circuits and small stations and as a missionary among the Choctaw Indians. He located several times for short periods on account of failing health or to attend to his secular business, and finally died in a local relation at Hon. Henry G. Johnson's, at Clinton, Miss. His end was full of religious peace and comfort.

Maj. John A. Cotton had been a regular soldier in the United States Army, and was well versed in military tactics and discipline. He was a bold, daring man, and inclined to leadership. Before his conversion he was an ardent politician, wild and wicked. He married and settled somewhere on the Alabama River. He became embarrassed with debt and brought some property to Mississippi for sale to relieve his embarrassment. While here he fell in with Thomas Griffin, and was greatly impressed under his preaching, became awakened and converted, and on his return to Alabama he and his wife joined the Methodist Church. Mr. Cotton was very impulsive, and sometimes his zeal was not sufficiently tempered with knowledge. He was licensed to preach in 1827,

and in December was admitted on trial into the Conference. He made a warm-hearted, zealous, impulsive preacher, and was useful on the circuits he traveled, though he always provoked some opposition by being dogmatical in his remarks and too exacting in the administration of discipline. Mr. Cotton graduated to deacon's and elder's orders in due course, and was one of the working men in the Conference. In 1832-33 he was on Coles Creek Circuit. About the middle of his two years' term there his devoted and faithful wife went triumphantly to her eternal rest. Mr. Cotton married Miss Julia Folkes, a pious young lady of a good family, and seemed to be settling down in the quietude of married life again. But it was said the honor of the ministry, the purity of the Church, and the voice of public opinion demanded a legal investigation of a rumored charge against him, and he was summoned before a committee of investigation. When the committee reported, a motion was made by Francis A. Owen to deprive him of his official standing, which motion prevailed by seventeen for and thirteen against, which showed that a large minority, including some of the first men of the Conference, did not believe the testimony established any criminal intentions against Mr. Cotton. He retired into private life, and engaged in agricultural pursuits, and so conducted himself that he was soon restored to his official standing, and in a few years to his former position in the Conference. He possessed a large amount of pulpit power, was well acquainted with the avenues to the human heart, and was a successful tactician in revival meetings.

The Conference received boxes of ready-made clothing from the Ladies' Sewing Societies of New Orleans and Natchez, which were placed in the hands of the presiding elders, to distribute among the most needy preachers. The thanks of the Conference were voted to the kind donors.

The Book Agents at New York addressed us a letter setting forth their purpose to establish a weekly Church paper at Cincinnati. Our Conference ordered the Secretary to reply that we did not believe they had authority to establish such a paper, that being the prerogative of the General Conference.

Samuel Cresswell, a holy man and faithful preacher, who was on probation, died during the year, and the Conference appointed a committee to write a suitable memoir, to be published in the *New York Christian Advocate*.

Daniel D. Brewer, one of our most faithful and useful young ministers, also died on Rapides Circuit. Mr. Brewer was a native of North Carolina, and came to Louisiana about 1827, soon after which he was awakened and converted, and felt called to the work of the ministry. His early educational advantages were limited, but he at once became a close student, so that by the end of 1828 he was ready to be received on trial, and was on his fifth circuit at the time of his death. From the time he entered the Conference he seemed to be wholly absorbed in his work. He studied, prayed, preached, visited, and conversed seriously about religion everywhere. Two years of his ministry he spent in Mississippi, two in Alabama, and the fifth, until his death, in Louisiana. No young minister with the same amount of talents

could have been more successful in winning souls to Christ than he was. He was buried not far above Alexandria, and his grave was well marked.

Clinton, Miss., was chosen as the place of our next annual session, and Bishop Emory gave November 12, 1834, as the time.

The session closed in the church on Thursday, November 21, 1833, after the Bishop's address to the preachers and reading of the appointments.

Western Louisiana was again divided into two districts, with Orsamus L. Nash on the Louisiana District and Preston Cooper on the Lake Providence District. A new circuit appeared in the Louisiana District, called Franklin, with Washington Ford as pastor. The name of Rapides Circuit was changed to Alexandria, that of Boeuf Prairie to Harrisonburg, and Atakapas to Opelousas. In the Lake Providence District Carroll was substituted for Lake Providence, and Concordia for Lake St. Joseph.

William Winans succeeded Barnabas Pipkin on the New Orleans District. New Orleans was left to be supplied, as was also the newly inaugurated mission to the seamen and another to the colored people. A mission was established in what was then the upper part of the city, called LaFayette, and Robert D. Smith was appointed in charge. A new work was also organized on the coast of Lake Pontchartrain, called Covington and Madisonville, with Needham B. Raiford as pastor. Washington was dropped as the name of a district, and Natchez took its place. Thomas Clinton was continued presiding elder, with nine pastoral charges in his district; and

any one acquainted with the geography of the country, by looking at the names of his circuits, can see what a vast territory he had to traverse and overlook.

The name of Yazoo District was substituted by that of Vicksburg, with John Lane continued as presiding elder. In this district Clinton and Jackson were united in a pastoral charge, with Dr. Job M. Baker as pastor. His success in Jackson, the capital of the State, must have been small, as neither Church nor Church organization was there in 1836. Raymond was substituted for Crystal Spring as the name of a circuit. The name of Big Sand Mission was discontinued, and Yalobusha and Tallahatchie Missions were added to the Vicksburg District. These missions had no very definite bounds. They were intended to embrace as many of the new settlements in North Mississippi as the three preachers sent to them could visit.

On the 20th of October, 1832, the "Treaty of Pontotoc" was completed, by which the Chickasaw Indians relinquished all their remaining lands in North Mississippi, and immediately commenced moving to the Indian Territory, west of Arkansas. This gave another large, new territory to occupy with a scanty supply of ministers. Emigrants poured into the Chickasaw purchase from every direction, and with them many Methodist families, embracing some first-class local and traveling preachers, who aided greatly in supplying the newcomers with the word and ordinances of the gospel.

Alexander Talley was continued Superintendent of the Choctaw Mission West, with Thomas Myers,

William W. Oakchiah, and Moses Perry as assistants.

The names of several districts and circuits were changed without any essential change in the form of the work. This was done by the suggestion of Bishop Emory, who advised to give the pastoral charges geographical names, such as post towns, county towns, cities, etc., so that their location could be found by consulting an ordinary gazetteer or on the maps of the country. This would be an accommodation to persons desiring to write to the pastors, and also to future historians.

The Bishop gave us a very hard appointment. It embraced Washington, the original hive of Methodism in Mississippi. It was called Adams Circuit, and embraced all of Adams County outside of Natchez and portions of Jefferson and Franklin Counties. The Churches had been greatly weakened numerically and financially by the removal of large numbers of patronizing families to the Choctaw Purchase. The unpleasantness growing out of the deposition of Miles Harper had thrown many obstacles in the way of our success; and the developments in the case of Andrew Adams, who traveled the circuit the year before, greatly discouraged the people, and gave those opposed to our Church cause of suspicion against the honor and integrity of our preachers. The result was an earnest protest from some of the official members against having a man with a family sent to the circuit: they could not support a family; they had more trouble with married than with single preachers, and asked that a single preacher be sent. As we were a member of the Bishop's council, we

heard all these matters thoroughly discussed. It was affirmed by some who knew the ill feeling of many on the circuit, in addition to their poverty, that they would not even try to support a married preacher, and that he must live on his own resources until he overcame that feeling. Others in the council said that if a man could be found who would go there and do faithful work such men as William Foster, Simeon Gibson, Isaac Noble, and John Robson would pay the expenses in the end. The conclusion was that the writer must go and attempt the rehabilitation of the broken-down circuit. Washington being the center of the circuit, he decided to place his family there, but he could find no person willing to board his wife and little son. One of the leading stewards said that we had better settle our family and go to work, while we were young and able to make a support for them and to lay up something for old age, for we ought to know that the Church would not support ministers with families. We could not see through the dark cloud, and knew not what to do except to trust in God, labor, and wait patiently for the dawn of a brighter day. We considered our contract, in receiving the appointment, imperiously binding for the year, and determined to serve the circuit in the face of all opposition until the next Conference. That good man and quiet and faithful Christian, Thomas Farrar, came to our relief. He assisted us in getting a small cottage to live in, furnished firewood, and otherwise helped to set up housekeeping. Our prospects were gloomy for near half of the year. For the only time in our itinerancy of more than fifty years, we determined on loca-

tion at the end of the year. And now we ask the reader to pardon us for relating some family affairs that can be drawn from us only in view of their good and useful influence on others, and as illustrations of the faithful providence of God. Whenever we referred to the probabilities of our location, we noticed that our partner in distress was silent and sad. We came in one day unusually discouraged with our financial prospects. Some of our little debts for family supplies were overdue several months, and not a dollar was in sight to liquidate them. We told wife that we were fully determined on location at the end of the year. The inspiration of the Holy One seemed to come suddenly upon her, and she addressed us as follows: "My dear husband, I sincerely hope you will not locate. I married you as a traveling preacher; and if you locate, it will blight all my cherished hopes of your increasing usefulness. I know you are troubled about the support and comfort of your family; but if you do your duty, you need give yourself no anxiety on that point; for I fully believe that God in some way will amply provide for us." Her tone was respectfully affectionate, but firm and earnest. We could make no reply. We walked out of the house soliloquizing: "No honorable man could locate with such a wife. We are a doomed man! Our fate is to continue in the itinerancy at all hazards." We soon became strong in the faith that God, in his own good time and way, would provide for us. Presently that dear old saint, William Foster, of Pine Ridge, now ready for his long-sought home in heaven, incidentally heard of our pecuniary embarrassment and gave us five hun-

dred dollars to pay all our debts. That saintly lady, Mrs. Brabston, gave us fifty dollars, and Peter T. Rabb twenty. In addition to these and other private donations, the quarterage began to come in regularly, and we soon found ourselves relieved from all pecuniary want. The Lord favored us with a gracious revival in Washington, with encouraging prospects at some country appointments.

In a large neighborhood since known as Mount Carmel, in the northwestern corner of Franklin County, there was a glorious ingathering. We first commenced preaching and holding class meeting in the private residence of Daniel Guice. Then Daniel and Jacob Guice, Electious Williams, James Epps, and others put up a good hewed-log church on the site of the present Mount Carmel Church, where there was a gradual increase of members until it became one of the strongest Churches in all the country. Daniel Guice, who was a very earnest Christian, was for many years the class leader at Mount Carmel. There was a time when his Church seemed to be no longer progressive. The young people were growing up irreligious, and the heart of the good class leader was deeply troubled. He betook himself to earnest prayer for a revival; and believing it should start in the Church, he would take his class paper every day and, retiring to a clump of bushes, pray separately for every one whose name was on his register and for the special necessities of each case. This persistent knee work of Uncle Daniel, as we generally called him, was soon succeeded by a most glorious revival at Mount Carmel.

Who will write a history of the women of the itin-

erancy? As God calls some men to be itinerant preachers, so he calls some women to be the wives; and they are capable of becoming thoroughly imbued with the spirit and work of the itinerancy. It is seldom that they can travel with their husbands, but their thoughtful zeal in helping them off to their work and providing for the families in their absence, with many other incidents of self-denial and cross-bearing, show how deeply they are interested in the work of saving souls. The history of these beloved daughters of Zion, with their works of faith and labors of love, has never yet been written. Could any one capable of the pleasing task collect the materials and write their history, it would be at once one of the most beautiful and useful illustrations of active Christianity.

No numerical statistics for this year are given in the General Minutes, but the written Journal gives an increase over last year of four hundred and ninety-nine white, one hundred and fifty-six colored, and twenty-six Indian members, making the aggregate membership in the Conference nine thousand seven hundred and twelve.

CHAPTER XIII.

1834.

THE Mississippi Conference assembled in Clinton, Miss., November 12, 1834. The bishop not being present, William Winans was called to the chair and opened the session with religious services. A letter was read from Bishop Soule, bringing the sad news that an almost entire failure of his physical powers compelled him to relinquish the hope of being present. The Conference proceeded to ballot for a president, and William Winans was elected. He made a very correct and agreeable presiding officer, and counseled and admonished the preachers in wholesome episcopal style. Robert D. Smith was elected Secretary.

The town of Clinton was in the zenith of its prosperity: enjoyed a lively trade with the surrounding country; had a refined and intelligent population; the Mississippi College and an academy for girls within the corporation; a Presbyterian and a Methodist Church, each having a membership including many of the best families. The Conference was very hospitably and pleasantly entertained. After the establishment of the Vicksburg and Jackson Railroad, the trade of Clinton was diverted to other points and the town declined.

The regular Conference business was taken up,

and faithfully and impartially gone through with item by item. Winfrey B. Scott, William Langarl, John R. McIntosh, Abdah C. Griffin, and David M. Wiggins were admitted on trial. Anthony H. Holcomb, Henry Stephenson, Jonathan C. Jones, Jesse A. Guice, Bazell G. Puckett, Samuel L. L. Scott, Absalom D. Wooldridge, Enoch Whatley, and William W. Oakchiah, the native Choctaw, were continued on trial. After being admonished for deficiencies in the course of study, Charles K. Marshall, John G. Parker, Uriah Whatley, William S. Thornburg, and Cotman Methven were elected deacons. Washington Ford and Needham B. Raiford were eligible to elder's orders in point of time; but Mr. Ford was not present to be examined on the course of study and could not be elected, and Mr. Raiford's examination was not fully satisfactory and he was not elected. Jephthah Hughes and William H. Turnley were readmitted; John Mathews, John Bilbo, Job M. Baker, John B. Higginbotham, James R. West, and Isaac Applewhite located; Isaac Taylor, Thomas Myers, William S. Thornburg, and John Dixon were discontinued; William Winans needed to be superannuated on account of great debility, but they could only supply the old Wilkinson Circuit with a young man just admitted on trial, and Mr. Winans consented to be placed on the supernumerary roll that he might have charge of this important circuit; Hardy Mullins, William Stephenson, William V. Douglass, and Thomas Owens were superannuated; Henry H. Shook was elected local deacon, and Isaac Wills local elder.

The Conference was unusually exacting in regard

to the course of study. There was a laudable determination to elevate the standard of ministerial education. The Conference voted quite a number of admonitions from the Chair to sundry undergraduates to be more diligent in their studies, which President Winans administered with stern integrity. Some of the younger brethren complained that the older ministers were attempting to elevate the course of study above the level of their own heads. Doubtless if some of us had been examined with the same searching exactitude we would not have passed. But that was the misfortune of our times. We expect our younger brethren, with their superior advantages, to rise quite above the standard under the old, disheartening course of study.

Every year the Conference drew a dividend from the Book Concern and from the Chartered Fund to supplement the deficient salaries of the preachers. As an illustration, the dividends for the present year were as follows: The Book Concern, six hundred dollars; the Chartered Fund, seventy-five dollars.

The liberal and faithful patron of our itinerancy in the Mississippi Conference, William Foster, of Pine Ridge, remembered us in his last will. He died in a ripe old age in 1834, and in his will bequeathed to the Conference thirty shares of stock in the Planters' Bank, of the State of Mississippi, the annual interest of which was to be applied to the most necessitous cases among our traveling preachers. Benjamin M. Drake was appointed by this Conference to receive a legal transfer of the stock, and to collect the annual dividends, which were to be added

to the interest of the Preachers' Fund Society of the Mississippi Conference. But alas for the stability of all moneyed investments! In a few years the bank broke, and the thirty shares of stock which Mr. Foster hoped would be doing good in all coming time were hopelessly lost.

The Manual Labor School, or School of Industry, was now looked upon "as the seminary about to be established," and Benjamin M. Drake, James P. Thomas, and John Lane were elected commissioners to make the location and contract for the building of the houses necessary. Subscriptions were to be taken by all the preachers, and a general traveling agent was to be appointed. The plans of the Conference would not work. A respectable minority did not believe a manual labor school could succeed in Mississippi. They were in favor of a college proper, without any appendage of manual labor. The resolutions of the majority were not carried out, and the establishment of the "School of Industry" was postponed.

In the examination of character some difficulties came up in the case of Jonas Westerland, who had become involved in some pecuniary transactions which were disparaging to a minister. As he was not present, the only alternative was to leave him without an appointment and appoint a committee under the supervision of the presiding elder of the Louisiana District, to investigate his case at Alexandria, where he resided. The investigation proved unfavorable to Mr. Westerland.

The beloved Alexander Talley, the apostle of the Choctaw Nation, made his final report of the Mission

to this Conference. His almost worn-out constitution, with the claims of a young family, required his release from the arduous duties of the Mission. His report was very cordially accepted, and the Conference unanimously passed the following resolution :

Resolved, That this Conference express its entire approbation of Brother Talley's management of the Choctaw Mission, and that it highly appreciates his services and sacrifices in that mission.

After a session of eight days, President Winans announced the appointments and, according to usage, we mounted our horses and scattered. The addition of much new territory and the enlargement of the work in the older portions of the Conference required considerable readjustment in the districts and pastoral charges. All of Louisiana west of the Great Swamp constituted the Louisiana District, with Preston Cooper as presiding elder. Mr. Cooper was still one of the rising young men of the Conference. His deep and fervent piety, his studious habits, and his close attention to every ministerial duty secured for him great influence among the people of his charge. In addition to his superior preaching talents, he was a fine singer, which increased his popularity and usefulness.

A mission to the people of color on Bayou Boeuf, south of Alexandria, was added to the Louisiana District and left to be supplied. Four or five other colored missions were established in different parts of the Conference and left to be supplied, in view of securing the services of local preachers. The most important mission established at this Conference was one to the province of Texas. Hitherto no form

of religion had been legally recognized in Texas except that of the Roman Catholic Church. As private individuals, Protestants were generally left undisturbed in their faith; but no Protestant public worship or Protestant Church organization was tolerated by the laws of the Mexican Republic. Where the Protestants were greatly in the majority, as they were in Northeastern Texas, their worship was connived at in private houses. And hence, as far back as 1824, the first regular missionary from our Conference, Henry Stephenson, now placed in charge of our newly established mission in Texas, was in the habit of making occasional preaching excursions in the Redland country. Indeed, there was preaching in what turned out to be Texas territory, between Red River and Sulphur Fork, as early as 1818; but this strip of country was then thought to belong to the United States, and hence the pioneer preachers were not only allowed to preach, but to organize Churches, and here doubtless the very first Methodist Churches were organized on Texas soil.

In 1833 James P. Stephenson, a son of William Stephenson, who was on the Sabine Circuit, held a two days' meeting at Milam in the month of May; and early in July, assisted by other ministers, a camp meeting in the vicinity of Col. Samuel B. McMahan's. This camp meeting was repeated in September of the same year, at which a Church of forty-eight members was organized. This was the first Methodist Church organized on what was known to be Texas territory. Henry Stephenson was an active participant in all these movements. In 1834, when he was on Sabine Circuit in Louisiana, in the month of June, he made

a preaching tour through San Augustine County, and at the house of Mr. George Teel formed a society, Miss Eliza McFarland, late of Monroe, La., being the first to offer herself for Church membership. This was probably the second Church organized in Texas.

The province of Texas was now in an active state of revolution, and in religious matters little attention was paid to the prohibitory laws of Mexico, especially by the Redlanders. A regular mission circuit was planned in Texas, connected with the Louisiana District. Henry Stephenson was more than willing to take charge of this mission. For more than a dozen years he had kept his eye and heart on the establishment of Methodism in Texas. He seemed to feel a providential call in that direction, and kept himself poor in worldly substance by devoting much of his time and labor, mainly at his own expense, to these pioneer preaching excursions. As early as 1824 Mr. Stephenson penetrated westward to Austin's Colony and preached in private houses, and did the same in 1828 and in 1830. There is no statistical report of the number of members in this mission, either in the General Minutes or the written journal, and in the confusion which followed the revolution and the Cherokee war in the Redlands the mission was suspended for several years.

There are many conflicting opinions as to who was the first Methodist preacher to visit Texas, where the first sermon was preached, the first camp meeting held, the first Church organized, etc.

Barnabas Pipkin was presiding elder on the New Orleans District, John C. Burruss was stationed at

the First Church in New Orleans; Alexander Talley for six months to the Upper Fauxbourg and LaFayette Mission, and Samuel L. L. Scott was appointed in charge of the mission to the colored people. William M. Curtis was continued in the Book Depository. The mission to the seamen is not mentioned in the list of appointments, though our preachers still took part, with those of other denominations, in preaching to the sailors. Baton Rouge was made a station, with Charles K. Marshall in charge. Mr. Marshall was blessed in his labors, and added many to the Church.

Benjamin M. Drake was appointed in charge of the Natchez District, and soon began to display those extraordinary pulpit powers which made him so deservedly conspicuous in all his after life. Hitherto he had been confined much of his time to town and city stations; and having to prepare two or three sermons a week for the same congregation, they were evidently immature and often wanting in pulpit power. He was a clear and graceful speaker, but he did not seem to have room in a station for the full development of his preaching abilities. Those who knew him before as well as after he was appointed presiding elder could see how rapidly his talents were developed into a most powerful pulpit laborer. To his large quarterly and camp meeting audiences, where he had ample time to elaborate his sermons, for clearness, directness, and power he preached as never before. He had not the revival tactics of Thomas Owens, Ira Byrd, or Thomas Griffin; yet he was decidedly a revivalist, and few men labored harder for the manifest awakening

and conversion of souls than did Benjamin M. Drake. As an executive officer he adhered strictly to the laws of the Church, and he was one of the best expositors of our disciplinary rules. Hitherto it had been the usage on circuits for the preacher in charge to appoint the place of holding the Quarterly Conference; but Mr. Drake introduced the practice of the Quarterly Conference fixing the place of its sitting by a majority vote, and the practice has become universal. He was a progressive man, and encouraged whatever tended to increase the efficiency and extend the usefulness of all Church enterprises. He favored the building of comfortable church houses in a style suitable to the advanced state of society; also large and substantial camp meeting sheds to protect the congregation from the sun and rain. He utterly ignored choirs and organs in congregational singing, and opposed them sternly to the end of his life. He conscientiously believed that our old Wesleyan style of encouraging all our people to sing earnestly was by far the most pleasant and useful style of conducting this important part of our public worship. He was a superior singer himself, and was familiar with the popular songs and choruses, and often used them with great effect. Mr. Drake was a representative man in the ministry. In addition to an attractive personal appearance, he had a well-trained voice that could be distinctly heard in a congregation of any size. Such were his fervent piety, mature judgment, and unabating zeal that all the interests of the Church were safe in his hands.

Robert D. Smith was stationed in Natchez and was

also Superintendent of the Choctaw Mission West. The name of Adams Circuit was changed to that of Washington, and the writer was reappointed. Washington Ford was appointed to Coles Creek, but his domestic circumstances were such that he could not fill the appointment. We proposed to the presiding elder that if he would employ Miles Harper on the Kingston part of Washington Circuit and Richard Overby to assist us we would unite Coles Creek and Washington into one vast circuit and supply each Church with preaching once a fortnight. The proposed arrangement was made.

This was the year of Rev. John Newland Maffitt's first visit to Natchez, where he conducted a revival meeting a month or two, day and night. He spent several weeks at Washington, where was also a glorious revival.

Port Gibson and Grand Gulf, for the want of a suitable preacher, were connected with Bayou Pierre Circuit, with John Cotton in charge.

John Lane was continued on the Vicksburg District, which included Carroll Circuit in Louisiana and Washington and Bolivar Counties in Mississippi. Benjamin A. Houghton was stationed in Vicksburg, and Elias R. Porter, an eloquent and talented transfer from the Tennessee Conference, in Clinton.

A new district was organized to include the old White Sand Circuit, east of Pearl River, and extended northward to include most of the Choctaw and Chickasaw purchases. The circuits in this vast territory retained the names of last year, with the addition of Sineasha Mission, intended to embrace

Leake and Attala Counties from the waters of Tuscalametta on the south to the French Camps on the north, and also that of the Choctaw Mission East, which was supplied by a native local preacher named Toblechubby. This mission was composed of a considerable number of Choctaw families east of Rankin County who had not yet removed to the West. Their official members were connected with the Rankin Circuit Quarterly Conference. Orsamus L. Nash was appointed to this extensive district, and during the year did a large business as land agent for sundry capitalists, which, on account of the great financial crash that soon after came on the country, turned out to be a very onerous and a very unproductive burden to both agent and capitalists. Multiplied thousands of dollars were lost by the attempted speculation.

Charles F. Carney was appointed principal missionary to the Choctaw Nation West, to labor in conjunction with William W. Oakchiah and Moses Perry. Dr. James P. Thomas was appointed Agent for the Mississippi Conference Seminary, which yet had no existence, and a worthy layman by the name of Lewis Bryan took his place as President of the Elizabeth Female Academy. A. D. Wooldridge was continued as Professor of Languages in the Jackson (Louisiana) College.

In the earlier days of Methodism in New Orleans Mrs. William Ross, Jacob Knobb and wife, Patrick Thompson and wife, and a few others were valuable members of the Church. Miss Peggy Skinner, a maiden lady, came to New Orleans from Maryland about 1816. She was a true Methodist in principle

and practice, and very often shouted in the social meetings of the Church. She lived in the city more than forty years, and always held the respect and confidence of her coreligionists. In her latter years she was generally called by her younger associates "Aunt Peggy." She lived to see her Church in a very prosperous condition.

Mrs. Theresa Cannoe was a French lady, born and brought up in the Island of Santo Domingo, where she lived until the terrible massacre of the whites by the negroes. Seeing her life in immediate peril, she ran to the quay and importuned a kind-hearted negro man to put her on board a vessel anchored a little way from shore. She now felt that she had no home or kindred on earth, and it was a matter of small importance as to where the vessel was going, so she escaped the bloody fate of her race on her native isle. She was landed in Wilmington, N. C., where she soon found a home and employment in a worthy Methodist family. She was fairly educated, and her social position was somewhat elevated in her native land; but she knew nothing of religion except the faith and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. Soon after her arrival in Wilmington she began to learn something about the Protestant faith and forms of worship, especially as held and practiced by the Methodists. Camp meeting season came on, and her hostess invited her to accompany the family to their annual camp meeting. Here Mrs. Cannoe was awakened and brought into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God. Believing she could succeed better in New Orleans, where a large portion of the population spoke her

native language, she came to the city about 1820. She was greatly beloved by the Church and respected by the world. Perhaps no Christian lady in New Orleans ever exerted a greater religious influence for thirty-four consecutive years than she did. She has left the sweet savor of "a good name rather to be chosen than great riches."

Mr. Wesley Coleman was steward and class leader, and he and his wife were acknowledged as very consistent and reliable Church members. They afterwards left the city and moved to the West.

Mrs. Mary Jane, then the young wife of William Deacon, was converted in the old warehouse loft on Poydras Street between Carondelet and Barronne Streets, used by the Methodists as a place of worship about 1825, and Mr. Deacon united with the Church on Gravier Street in 1828. He made a very useful layman up to the time of his death, in 1858. Mrs. Deacon still lives, in mature old age. Her Christian life so far has been one of holiness, zeal, and good works. She is remarkably gifted in prayer, with a fervor, appropriateness, eloquence, and faith not often met with. She and other beloved sisters in Christ have "labored much in the Lord," and have been pillars in the Church for scores of years.

James Wright brought his Methodist family to New Orleans in the days of the old Gravier Street Church, and for a long series of years they were among the most prominent and useful members of our Church in the city. Mr. Wright was a successful cotton factor and commission merchant, handled a large amount of money and was noted for his lib-

erality to all the interests of the Church. His hospitable home was a rallying place for Methodists and Methodist preachers in general. James Wright did "good in Israel, both toward God and toward his house."

James Ross, though he died a member of the Presbyterian Church, deserves a notice in connection with our Church in New Orleans. His father, William Ross, was a prominent and active Presbyterian, but his mother was a Methodist, and his first recollection of Methodism was going with his mother to the first class meeting ever held in New Orleans. His father was an active participant in opposing the British invasion in 1814-15, and James was frequently sent to camp by his mother as the bearer of little family supplies to his father, and on the 8th of January, 1815, was near enough to witness the great closing battle of the war. A little negro boy that went with him was killed. He was trained to habits of industry, and grew up, under the teaching and example of his godly parents, a moral and upright youth. In 1828 William M. Curtiss was the pastor of Gravier Street Church. He was very successful in bringing young people into the Church, and among them was James Ross, who the following year married Miss Sarah H. Wailes, daughter of Levin Wailes and sister of Mrs. William M. Curtiss. Mr. Ross succeeded his father as flour inspector for the port of New Orleans, which office he held for more than forty years, to the time of his death. He also held other offices of honor and trust, and was ever in high estimation. About 1848 a very unhappy misunderstanding disturbed the peace and harmony

of our Church in New Orleans, when Mr. and Mrs. Ross withdrew their membership and united with the Presbyterian Church.

How often do the sacred writers of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures make honorable mention, not only of the deeply pious men of the Church, but also of the holy and useful women! We have attempted to follow their example and to make honorable mention of both the men and women of holiness and zeal with which our Church has been blessed.

Rev. James Carson, one of the early Methodists of Natchez, was born at Sligo, Ireland, in 1776. He recollected seeing Mr. Wesley administer the Lord's Supper in his father's house when he was a small boy. Mr. Carson was converted early in life, and commenced preaching when only eighteen years old. After preaching in Ireland as a local preacher, he came to New York; and after preaching in and around that city about fifteen years with marked acceptability and usefulness, he removed to Natchez in 1818. He lived in Natchez more than forty years, during which time he filled several offices of honor and trust, and was always esteemed as an upright and useful citizen. Through weal and woe he was ever true and faithful to the interests of the Church. As he advanced in years and into the infirmities of extreme old age, he grew in favor with the Church and his fellow-citizens. During the last ten or fifteen years of his life he was so deaf that he could not hear profitably any of the ordinary exercises of the sanctuary; yet, in "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night,"

he was, with rare exceptions, always in his place in the house of God. He not only wished to join the assembly of the saints in spirit in their public worship, but he also wished the force of his example to be felt. Mr. Carson descended peacefully into the shades of death July 1, 1860, aged eighty-four years, about seventy of which he was a public professor of discipleship to Christ. Mrs. Carson also was through a long life an exemplary follower of the Saviour, and died in peace at a good old age. One of their daughters, Mrs. Sarah Mathewson, may not be the oldest person in our Church in Natchez, but she is the oldest living Church member, dating her membership in Natchez from 1818. Like her sainted father, she has not only lost her hearing but also her sight. Yet such is her love for her Church and the Church of her ancestors that she regularly attends public worship. At the appointed hour, following the guidance of her no less pious sister, Miss Eliza Carson, she walks through what to her is utter darkness and unbroken silence to the house of God. O what a change she will realize when she wakes up in the image of God among the saints in glory!

Christopher Miller is one of the historical characters of Methodism in Natchez. He was born in Hagerstown, Md., in 1770, and came to Natchez several years before the termination of the Spanish government. In 1811 he descended to New Orleans on the first steamboat that ever passed Natchez. He united with the Church in 1823, and was a very consistent, straightforward, reliable member to the close of his life, in 1854. It was both pleasant and profitable to hear him narrate in his quiet, intelligent way the

reminiscences of a departed generation in and about Natchez. One of his cherished memories was the part he took in the capture of Aaron Burr on Coles Creek, a few miles from the Mississippi River, in January, 1807, at the house of Thomas Calvit. Mr. Miller was not very demonstrative in his religious impulses, but was remarkable for his regularity as a Christian and his devoted attention to all the interests of the Church. His long life was crowned with a tranquil death.

Mary Ann Robson (afterwards Mrs. Flintoff) was born in Durham County, England, March 16, 1791, and at the age of fifteen was received into the Church by Dr. Thomas Coke, our first bishop, on one of his return visits to England. When about twenty-four years of age she was married to Mr. William Flintoff, whose mother was a sister of the celebrated Lord Admiral Nelson, of the British Navy. Mr. Flintoff was also a true Wesleyan Methodist. They came to the United States in 1819, and settled in Orange County, North Carolina, where they at once connected themselves with the Methodist Episcopal Church. They had no church house in their neighborhood, and for a number of years their public worship and social meetings were held in a mill belonging to a brother of Mrs. Flintoff, who was also an active Methodist. Mr. Flintoff was their class leader; and after his death Mrs. Flintoff took charge of his class, which she led successfully, in connection with teaching in the Sunday school, about twenty years. In the meantime she also taught a highly creditable day school. It was as late as 1852 when she came to Natchez, where she immediately took

her position in the Church as an exemplary, active, and useful member. Her house was the constant abode of a happy and lively religious enjoyment. Both preachers and members often felt that it was good to be there. After having lived in the enjoyment of the favor and love of God for sixty-five years, she sweetly fell asleep in Jesus September 25, 1871, aged eighty years.

Miss Eliza Lowe was born in Knoxville, Tenn., December 3, 1792, and about 1800 was brought to Natchez, where she grew to womanhood, a handsome and most amiable young lady. There lived in Natchez a clever and enterprising young gentleman by the name of Peter Little, who had the sagacity to see a prize in this young lady from Tennessee, and sought and obtained her hand in marriage. They were married August 27, 1806. Mr. Little saw that his young wife had all the natural and mental endowments of a first-class woman except a finished education to qualify her for her proper position in society. She was fond of books and had improved herself considerably by private reading, but still she was deficient in the elements of a finished education. To remedy this, she went to a good school in Natchez several years after her marriage, and acquired such an education as qualified her to take her position in the most elevated class of society. This was all praiseworthy; but her religious history, in connection with her long life of Christian usefulness, is what mainly deserves admiration. When but a little girl she was impressed with a sense of her dependence on her Heavenly Father, and, to use her own language, she "always prayed to the God of Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob." On one of the early visits of Lorenzo Dow to Natchez she was awakened under his preaching. She at once determined to seek, according to the best light she could obtain, the forgiveness of her sins and the regeneration of her sinful nature. After many conflicts with an unbelieving heart, she was enabled to lay hold on Christ by faith as a present and all-sufficient Saviour. It was about 1818, when the small city of Natchez was connected with the large circuit of Claiborne, that she united with the Church under the pastorate of Rev. John Menefee. She united with Dr. Henry Tooley in forming the first Methodist Sabbath school in Natchez, and to this day the Sabbath School Society bears her honored name. She had a feeling heart for the needy of all classes. She was among the founders of the Natchez Orphan Asylum, and was an active and liberal member of the association to the end of her life. Mr. Little was an enterprising and thrifty man, and gradually acquired a large fortune. He built a palatial residence in the Bluff, overlooking the Mississippi River, with its hundreds of water craft continually passing and repassing, and this home became the abode of Christian hospitality on a magnificent scale. Bishops, presiding elders, pastors, and ministers of every grade met a cordial welcome there. The headquarters of John N. Maffitt were there during his protracted sojourn in Natchez. In the midst of this wealth and notoriety Mrs. Little was the same meek-spirited, quiet, unostentatious follower of Jesus, showing her faith not so much by her words as by her works. She finished life's responsible and weary journey in great

peace on her plantation in Concordia Parish, La., September 20, 1853.

The maiden name of Mrs. Mary Reed was Patter-son. She was born in Pendleton County, Virginia, December 22, 1792, and was brought up near Pitts-burg, Pa. About 1820 her family came to Warren County, Mississippi, and settled on the waters of Bogue DeSha. Soon after she united with the Church under the ministry of Rev. John Lane, and at the first camp meeting held in the open woods near Mont Alban she was gloriously converted. Her husband died in Mexico, where he had gone on business, leaving her with a family of little children to bring up and educate on limited means; but she took God for her portion and the strength of her heart, and betook herself to the responsible task. Early in 1828 she removed to Natchez, where she reared her family and spent the remainder of her life. She was a most exemplary, deeply pious, zealous, and useful member, always ready and willing to do her part in private circles and in the social meetings of the Church. She was a safe counselor and a worthy example for the younger members of the Church. Her children occupy prominent places in the Church, and one of her grandsons was admitted on trial at the late session of the Mississippi Conference, in December, 1874. After a faithful pilgrimage on earth, she was permitted joyfully to depart and be with Christ November 13, 1863.

"But what of Aunt Cecil?" The reader need not fear that we will overlook one of the best women in Natchez. The history of Methodism would be very incomplete if she were left out. Sarah Cecil was

the daughter of Dr. L. B. Mitchel, and was born in Baltimore, Md., February 28, 1796. Her parents moved to Kentucky in 1800, and when she was fifteen years old she joined the Church in Louisville under the ministry of Rev. William McMahan. Soon after she was happily born into the kingdom of grace at a camp meeting held at Selma Church, near Middletown. After her marriage to Mr. Cecil she removed with her family to Natchez in 1818, and immediately reported her membership to the pastor, Rev. John Menefee. By her impulsive, outspoken religious enjoyment, and by her well-directed zeal and activity in all Church matters, she at once became an acknowledged leader in the sisterhood of the small but growing community of Methodists in Natchez. She was full of that sort of sympathy which is the outflowing of a heart richly imbued with the love of Christ, always ready to weep with those who wept and to rejoice with those who rejoiced. She was greatly gifted in prayer; was an intelligent and feeling speaker in class meeting and love feast and a successful worker about the altar in revivals; took an active and liberal part in all the benevolent enterprises of the Church; and was, in every sense, a helper in the gospel. In the midst of this joy, zeal, and activity in the Church, she was overtaken with the greatest sorrow that can overwhelm a wife and a mother. Her once gentlemanly and provident husband gave way to habits of degrading vice until he finally abandoned his family and became a wandering, homeless vagabond. This great affliction urged her nearer to God. She became more and more spiritually minded. She

mourned and wept and prayed for her lost husband until her faith grew strong and she felt an assurance that God in some way would save his soul, when she did not know where he was wandering in his dissipation and when no one else hoped for his reformation and conversion. Finally he was confined by long and excessive debility, during which he had time for reflection and penitential prayer. He seemed to drink the cup of bitter repentance to the very dregs, and then throw his guilty, polluted, and helpless soul on an all-sufficient Saviour, and died in hope of eternal life.

But this dear, sainted woman had another trial of her faith which, perhaps, was the means of her final perfection through suffering. Her youngest-born was her only son, and, like the mother of Samuel, she dedicated him to God from his birth for the services of the ministry. She named him Curtiss Drake, after two of her favorite pastors. Curtiss grew up a good boy, but in early manhood became neglectful of his religious duties. His life was beclouded with sin. The prospect of his becoming a preacher was anything but flattering. Still his mother affirmed that it would be so; that God would not let her faith be disappointed or her hope be lost. The most she now had to live for was by prayer and faith to nurse her dedicated son into the ministry. Finally he and his young wife righted up, changed their course, and united with the Church under circumstances which gave great encouragement of future success. The work of the aged mother on earth was now done; and having attained the ripe age of sixty-nine years, she died in full hope of eternal life.

February 27, 1865. She left her son, Curtiss D. Cecil, and his wife in charge of the old homestead. Their course has been that of true Christians. Mr. Cecil soon began to take an active part in the social meetings of the Church, then to giving more public exhortations, and then was licensed to preach; and after a very acceptable probation as a local preacher he was admitted on trial into the Conference, and is now (1875) in charge of Meadville Circuit.

These are only a few of the representative characters of the second generation of Methodists in Natchez. A volume could be filled with biographical sketches of their contemporaries. The names of a few others must be recorded.

Mrs. Sarah Bradley was noted for her deep and regular piety. She was especially commended as a constant reader of the Bible.

Letitia Harrison (whose maiden name was Gibson, her parents being of the original stock of Gibsons who adhered so early to our Church) was born in the vicinity of Natchez February 3, 1784, and, after a long and useful pilgrimage in the Church, died in peace and holy hope in Natchez, aged ninety years. She was a most lovely Christian, and in her latter years was almost universally called "Grandma" by the preachers and members of the Church.

William Vancampen and his wife, Mary H., came to Natchez from New York originally, and made two of the very best members. Their daily walk and conversation were a constant exhibition of a pure Christianity. Mr. Vancampen was active as a steward and class leader, as an exhorter, and finally as a local preacher. He felt that his mission as a

preacher was mainly to the colored people in Natchez and on the adjacent plantations, and he spent many years and endured some heavy persecution from wicked overseers in this important work. After the great financial crash of 1838-40, he became discouraged with the prospects of our country, and especially with the immorality implied in the fraudulent sale, concealment, or removal of property to avoid the payment of just debts, and removed to Illinois, where Mrs. Vancampen died in 1860, and Mr. Vancampen in 1862.

Jesse and Sarah M. Trahern were two most excellent Methodist Christians in Natchez between 1822 and 1828. Mr. Trahern was an admirable class leader and a zealous Methodist.

The grace of God was greatly magnified in the conversion and future religious life of John Brackett. He kept a retail drinking house, drank to excess himself, and associated daily with the rude and dissipated who patronized his establishment. He seemed to be quite beyond the reach of gospel influences. His wife became awakened, and after a season of deep penitence was truly converted and became a happy and faithful follower of the Lord. Of course one of her first cares was the conversion of her husband. She prayed most earnestly that he might be reclaimed from his dissipated habits and brought into the kingdom of Christ. She exhibited daily before him the beautiful example of a meek, humble, consistent, and happy Christian. It was not long before Mr. Brackett became thoroughly awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger, abandoned sin, and became an earnest seeker of salvation.

He promptly closed his drinking house, and was gloriously born into the kingdom of Christ. The change was manifest to all beholders. Sinners looked on with astonishment, and his fellow-Christians with adoring wonder at the grace of God as manifested in his salvation. His coffeehouse was superseded by a variety store; his business and the whole course of his life were now scrupulously regulated by the precepts of the gospel. Both he and his wife became active and useful members of the Church.

Mrs. Mary Anderson stood related to the first Methodist Church in Vicksburg very much as Sarah Cecil did to that of Natchez. How the Church could have arisen and prospered in Vicksburg without a few such members as Mrs. Anderson is difficult to conjecture. She was the daughter of John and Catharine Burnett, and was brought up in the lower valley of Pearl River. Mary Burnett was handsome, intelligent, and fascinating. She was first married to Mr. Francis Nailor, and after his death to Dr. Thomas Anderson. She had a happy experience of the justifying, regenerating, and sanctifying grace of God. Dr. Anderson located in Vicksburg when it was yet a small village, and secured a large and lucrative practice, which he retained to extreme old age. Mary Anderson was faithful unto death, May 13, 1833.

Thomas Berry and his wife embraced religion and united with the Church in the southeastern part of Mississippi. At an early day they came to Vicksburg and kept a temperance tavern, which in those days implied a boarding house for residents, a

house of entertainment for travelers, and a stable for horses. Livery stables were not then known in Mississippi as separate establishments. They were thorough Methodists. Rev. Thomas Berry died in great peace in the home of his brother, near Loogootee, Ind., February 10, 1873, aged eighty-four years.

CHAPTER XIV.

1835.

THE Mississippi Conference assembled, according to appointment, at Woodville, Miss., November 25, 1835. To the great joy of the Conference, Bishop Soule was present to open the session with the usual religious services. A fair proportion of the members were present. Robert D. Smith was again elected Secretary. A Committee on Memoirs was called for. This caused tears to flow afresh at the great loss sustained during the past summer in the death of two of our most beloved brethren—Dr. Alexander Talley and Jonathan C. Jones. Benjamin M. Drake and Robert D. Smith were appointed to prepare a memoir of Dr. Talley for the General Minutes, and Preston Cooper one of Jonathan C. Jones (who was on probation when he died) for the *Christian Advocate* and the Journal. On the last day of the session the committee reported a memoir of Dr. Talley, which was adopted “on condition that it should be amended by adding some facts of his early history,” and it was left in the hands of the committee for this purpose. The question in the General Minutes, “Who have died this year?” is answered “None.” Who was responsible for this? The memoir does not appear in the General Minutes until 1839; and notwithstanding that long delay, it is exceedingly

imperfect, containing neither the time nor the place of his birth nor of his conversion, nor the date of his death.

Doctor Talley was married three times. By his first and second marriages he had no living children; by his last he had two, who were beneficiaries of our Conference as long as they were claimants. By the end of 1834 he was so completely prostrated that he was compelled to give up missionary work among the Indians. It was his intention to ask a release from regular pastoral work that he might travel in quest of health; but the Upper Fauxbourg and LaFayette, immediately adjoining New Orleans, were fast filling up with an English-speaking population, and it was thought best to establish a mission among them, and Doctor Talley was selected as the most suitable man to organize the mission. He was appointed there for six months, with the understanding that he might leave as soon as the climate proved unfavorable to his health. On the approach of summer his health declined very perceptibly, and he set out with his family, intending to visit the Northwest. Between Natchez and Vicksburg he was violently attacked with cholera, and, being landed at Vicksburg, lived but a few hours and died in great peace and holy triumph. Not long before he expired he said: "My work on earth is done, and I am going to receive my reward." He was buried in the old cemetery, in the eastern part of the city. He has deservedly been styled "The Apostle of the Choctaws," for through his labors and sacrifices God opened the door of faith to these children of the wilderness.

Jonathan Coleman Jones was the youngest brother

of the author. He was the last child of Jonathan and Phebe Griffing Jones, and was born in Jefferson County, Miss., January 26, 1814. His father died when he was an infant, and his mother when he was nine years old. Jonathan lived not far away from old Caneridge, the headquarters of Methodism in those days. Three of his mother's sisters were members of that Church, and they watched over him with affectionate faithfulness and love, and kept him under the influence of the Church. When about eighteen years of age, after having led a very moral life, he was powerfully converted and became a jubilant and happy Christian. Gabriel and Abigail Scott still kept up their weekly prayer meeting in their house for the purpose of training the young members in the active duties of religion; and Jonathan having taken upon himself the vows of Church membership, they soon had him at work in the prayer and class meetings. He acknowledged his call to preach and immediately turned his attention to a preparation for the gospel ministry. Thomas Clinton, who was then presiding elder of the Washington District, employed him to fill a vacancy on Coles Creek Circuit, where he labored very acceptably in 1833. At the ensuing Conference he was admitted on trial and appointed in charge of St. Helena Circuit, where he labored very acceptably and usefully in 1834. At the end of the year he drew up a most complete plan of his circuit for his successor. It gave him on two pages of foolscap such a complete outline of persons, places, distances, the moral status of the Churches, etc., as would enable him to see his whole field of labor at a glance. At the Clin-

ton Conference he was appointed in charge of Alexandria Circuit, in Western Louisiana; and being anxious to get to his work, he left Clinton in a state of great bodily weakness and made his way through the Mississippi Swamp in the dead of winter to his circuit. His circuit was large, extending south of Alexandria as far down as Cheneyville, and up the Rapides and Cotite Bayous and around the head waters of Calcasieu River. He entered on his work with his characteristic regularity, earnestness, and zeal, and persevered through all weathers in preaching and in visiting his people from house to house. In Denham's neighborhood he found a fatal fever prevailing epidemically with all the virulence of yellow fever except its fatality was not so rapid. He immediately commenced visiting and praying with the sick, offering the consolations of religion to the dying, and burying the dead. In a few days he was taken with the deadly fever, but he still visited some of the sick near Mr. Denham's, where he was staying. After having the fever two days, he was told that a man in the vicinity, who had never been converted, was in a dying condition. He rose up and walked over to see him, told him that his only remedy was to give up his sins and come immediately to an all-sufficient and willing Saviour, then sang and prayed with him. The man professed faith in Christ and died in peace. After this he was confined to his bed, but for several days persisted in reading his regular Bible lessons, which, from his expositions to the family, he seemed to enjoy very much. His waking hours were all spent in prayer and praise, making occasional remarks about absent

friends and exhorting all who visited his room to meet him in heaven. By this time the epidemic had become so universal that each family had to do its own nursing, except when one died, when enough had to be spared to assist at the burial. The sound of a horn at any house was the signal of death. A dear brother, in whom Jonathan was much interested, was very sick not far from Brother Denham's. Only a few hours before he breathed his last, in the middle of the night, he heard the death signal, and, calling the brother's name, remarked: "There, he has got off to heaven before me; but I will soon follow him!" He not only died in peace, but with remarkable triumph over death. "Devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." They had buried their beloved Daniel D. Brewer the year before, and now to lose such a promising and useful young preacher as Jonathan C. Jones was a double affliction. He died August 15, 1835, in the twenty-second year of his age and the third of his ministry. A resolution was passed by the Conference a year or two after his death to put monuments at the graves of all our deceased itinerant preachers; but before it could be carried out in his case nearly all the leading families had left the neighborhood, and the identity of his grave was lost.

Fourteen were admitted on trial, and among them several who afterwards attained eminence in the ministry, such as Elijah Steele, Benjamin Jones, Levi Pearce, Andrew T. M. Fly, and William H. Watkins; eight were continued on trial; four received into full connection; two ordained deacons

and six elders; Stephen Herrin, Jesse Lee, and John A. Cotton (who had been fully restored to his ministerial functions) were readmitted; Robert Alexander, who had located at the Tennessee Conference in November, 1834, was readmitted into our Conference. Joseph Travis, formerly a member of the South Carolina Conference, but late of the Alabama Conference, with Seymour B. Sawyer, was received by transfer from the Alabama Conference and stationed in New Orleans, Upper Fauxbourg and La-Fayette Mission; William Craigg was received by transfer from the Tennessee Conference, and was appointed to Cold Water Mission; Samuel W. Speer was transferred, with two others, from the Tennessee to the Alabama Conference, but his destination was changed and he was appointed to Tallahatchie Circuit, in this Conference; Thomas Clinton, Joseph P. Snead, and William Winans were placed on the supernumerary roll, and Orsamus L. Nash, William V. Douglass, William Stephenson, and Thomas Owens were voted a superannuated relation; John C. Burruss, John Cotton, James Applewhite, Washington Ford, James P. Thomas, James P. Stephenson, and William W. Oakchiah were located at their own request, and by a similar request Abda C. Griffin, Uriah Whatley, Henry Stephenson, and Enoch Whatley were discontinued. From the local ranks James Reams, Stanley N. Veers, Jesse Ginn, and Pleasant B. Baily were elected to deacon's orders, and Thomas Lynch and John G. Lee to elder's.

This Conference was permitted to draw on the Book Concern for eight hundred dollars and on the Chartered Fund for ninety dollars, which sums, be-

ing added to domestic funds, were sufficient to pay all claimants in full, leaving a handsome surplus. This surplus was donated to the Missouri Conference. The Missouri Conference at this date included the State of Missouri and the Missouri and Arkansas Territories, and consequently was next-door neighbor, bordering on North Mississippi and Western Louisiana. The territory then embraced in the Missouri Conference has now upon it half a dozen thrifty, self-supporting Conferences.

The long-talked-of Manual Labor School, which never had a corporal existence, was now looked upon as a fixed fact. B. M. Drake, John Lane, and J. G. Jones were appointed commissioners to locate it at Crystal Springs, provided they could obtain a suitable amount of land for the purpose; and in case they could secure the land, they were authorized to contract for buildings worth twenty thousand dollars upon the pledge of the Conference to raise that sum. The commissioners made the reconnaissance at Crystal Springs, liked the land and water well enough; but the money not being in sight, they made no purchase and contracted for no buildings. And thus ended the Manual Labor School for that year. •

Rev. John N. Maffitt, the great orator and revivalist, considered Natchez his home at this time, and had commenced the publication of a great weekly paper called the *Mississippi Christian Herald*. The Conference resolved to patronize it "as long as it should be conducted in keeping with the principles, doctrines, and government of the Methodist Episcopal Church." The *Herald* was a good, safe Church

paper during its brief existence; but Mr. Maffitt was intended for an evangelist, not an editor, and he soon quit his paper and reëngaged in his appropriate work.

Many of the leading Methodist ministers in the North were perpetually stirring up ill feeling and strife on the subject of negro slavery; and while they carefully avoided the responsibility, toil, and self-sacrifice implied in preaching the gospel to "the benighted and sin-degraded slaves of the South," they were 'perpetually throwing almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of their brethren who were engaged in this truly apostolic work. The Southern planters knew that we were in close Church relationship with our Northern brethren; that their bishops were ours also, that our delegates sat with them in the same General Conference, and that a majority of that General Conference kept a section in the Discipline opposed to and denouncing slavery as a great evil. It was also known that during the last year or two the antislavery brethren of the North were trying to deluge the South with abolition publications by sending them, without our knowledge or consent, to our addresses through the mails. While we were innocent of any complicity in these movements against an exclusively civil institution, the existence and perpetuity of which were guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, this perpetual intermeddling of our Northern brethren threw a shade of suspicion, more or less, on every Southern itinerant Methodist preacher, which greatly interfered with our missions to the slaves, and in many instances deprived us entirely of access to

them. Such had been the difficulties of some of the missionaries to the colored people that the Conference thought it best to appoint a committee, consisting of William Winans, B. M. Drake, and John Lane, to draft a preamble and resolutions defining our position and expressing our sentiments on the subject of abolitionism. The document was carefully and elaborately written by Mr. Winans, defining our relation as ministers of the gospel to the civil institutions of the country. This report was adopted, printed, and extensively circulated, and to a great extent relieved us of the odium brought upon us by the misguided intermeddling of our Northern coreligionists. From this time our colored missions became more popular, and hundreds of the poor, ignorant, degraded slaves were brought into happy Church fellowship.

As usual, a box of clothing was received from the Ladies' Sewing Society of Natchez, which was placed in the hands of the presiding elders for distribution among their most needy preachers, and a unanimous rising vote of thanks was returned to the kind donors.

It will be remembered that there were some difficulties in the case of Jonas Westerlund at our last Conference, and that he was left without an appointment and a committee arranged to look into the matter at Alexandria. At this Conference he was charged with dishonest insolvency and falsehood. The charges were sustained and he was expelled. He appealed to the General Conference, where Benjamin M. Drake defended the action of the Conference and Stephen G. Roszel, of the Baltimore Con-

ference, appeared in behalf of the appellant. The appeal was not sustained. He was afterwards fully restored to his ministerial functions, and died in Alexandria while acting as Bible Agent.

Our Church was slowly gaining ground in New Orleans. The little wooden church on Gravier Street was now too small for our constantly increasing congregation, and the trustees had purchased a more eligible lot on Poydras Street and asked advice and coöperation in building a new church. The Conference advised them to sell or mortgage the Gravier Street Church and use the proceeds in the erection of the new one. The Conference also pledged to coöperate with the building committee by soliciting subscriptions and donations from the people of the several charges; also a resolution passed respectfully requesting Rev. John N. Maffitt to give his services in the new enterprise. Mr. Maffitt was at this time preaching with great popularity in New Orleans, and, seeing the absolute necessity of a larger and more eligible house of worship, entered heartily into the new movement. The lot on Poydras Street was cleared off, a large tent was erected with temporary seats and pulpit, and every laudable means employed to attract a large audience to hear Mr. Maffitt's address, in connection with the laying of the corner stone, on the necessity and importance of building a suitable church for the constantly increasing congregation. Everything went off well. Mr. Maffitt delivered an appropriate, eloquent, and powerful address, which was published and circulated generally among the people. This movement gave the cause such notoriety and such a

forward impulse that it was not long before we had a large and commodious brick church. Hon. Edward McGehee, of Wilkinson County, Miss., contributed largely to the erection of this church, as he had formerly done to the erection of the first church on Gravier Street. In addition to his donations to the church, he loaned the building committee at least ten thousand dollars to complete and furnish the building; and in after years, when they were unable to raise money to refund him, with his characteristic liberality he made a donation of the amount due him to the Church. This church was dedicated in 1836. It caught a falling spark from a distant fire in January, 1851, and was burned. The present Carondelet Church takes its place, though not on the same lot.

The New York Conference desired to have some change made in the General Rule on the subject of using ardent spirits, and sent the proposed change for our Conference concurrence. The Conference unanimously voted not to concur because of an unwillingness to have the General Rules tampered with, but also because the present Rule was all-sufficient.

The delegates elected to the ensuing General Conference, to be held in Cincinnati in May, 1836, were William Winans, Benjamin M. Drake, and John Lane, with William M. Curtis and Benjamin A. Houghton as reserves.

The General Conference discontinued the Book Depository in New Orleans, the patronage being too limited to justify its continuance. The General Conference did another thing—whether by the ad-

vice or connivance of our delegates is not known—which few of this Conference approved. Hitherto the Missouri Conference had included the Territory of Arkansas; but it was now desirable to detach Arkansas and organize the Territory into a new Conference, and in order to give it a more respectable size in the number of preachers, as well as in territory, the Louisiana (now called Alexandria) District was detached from the Mississippi Conference and added to the Arkansas. This was an ill-advised measure, and so thought the General Conference in 1840, returning it to the Mississippi Conference. The change had interfered with our favorite project of acquiring Texas as an addition to our Conference by placing territory between us and that desirable field. A missionary had been sent to Texas the preceding year, and we were now watching the exciting revolution there with great interest in reference to further missionary operations. We believed Texas would soon become an independent Protestant Republic, if not a member of our Federal Union; and being the nearest Annual Conference, without any intervening Indian nations, we naturally looked to the early occupancy of that field. Early in December, 1837, Robert Alexander was sent across the territory of the Arkansas Conference as a missionary to Texas.

After appointing a day of fasting and prayer, and voting the next meeting to be in Vicksburg, the Conference assembled in the church to hear the Bishop's charge and receive the appointments. The Bishop's closing address to the Conference was most inspiring. The venerable man was unusually ten-

der and emotional himself, and while we sang the usual closing hymn, commencing,

And let our bodies part
To diff'rent climes repair;
Inseparably joined in heart
The friends of Jesus are,

tears of love and joy and holy hope coursed rapidly down his saintly face. Several of the young preachers were greatly excited, especially that most lovely and promising young man, Elijah Steele. He had been employed a part of the previous year by Presiding Elder Drake to assist Jesse A. Guice on Amite Circuit, and had already commenced the development of those extraordinary talents that made his short career in the ministry so brilliant. This was his first Conference. He had been brought up to farm labor, and had never been much from home. The thought of going among entire strangers was painful to his feelings. He hoped at least to be continued within Mr. Drake's district. The Bishop passed all the old districts, and yet his name was not called. His excitement became intense. He was trying to write down the appointments as the Bishop slowly announced them, but could scarcely get his pencil to obey his will. "Where on earth am I going? To the New Purchase, I suppose, as all the old districts are filled up," was the question he asked himself and the answer he gave. Presently the Bishop read out: "Choctaw District, John G. Jones, Presiding Elder; Sineasha Mission, Elijah Steele." He ceased to write. The whole world seemed to become a blank to him except Sineasha Mission. As soon as the Bishop ceased to read and

had dismissed the assembly, he rushed to me with a countenance indicative of great emotion, and inquired: "Brother Jones, where on earth is Sineasha Mission? I am perfectly willing to go there and do the best I can, if I only knew how to get there; but I don't know where Sineasha is." From that hour all his thoughts centered on Sineasha Mission. Yes, he would go to Sineasha Mission and do the very best he could. He would get up just as many appointments among the new settlers as he could fill. He would try to have a revival. In the meantime he would take his books along and, limited as his education was, master his prescribed course of study if among the possibilities of itinerant life. He was indeed a young man to be loved and admired.

The original Natchitoches Circuit was now called Claiborne, after the name of a new parish which had been formed out of the northern part of the old Natchitoches Parish, and another circuit had been formed embracing the old town of Natchitoches, which took that name. The original Washita Circuit now took the name of Monroe, and Rapides that of Alexandria. The name of the district was also changed from that of Louisiana to Alexandria, and William H. Turnley succeeded Preston Cooper as presiding elder. In those days necessity often required unordained men, just admitted on trial, to be placed in charge of important circuits. At this Conference Levi Pearce and Benjamin Jones, just admitted on trial and lately licensed to preach, were sent, the former to Opelousas and the latter to Alexandria Circuit; but they were young men to be trusted.

Barnabas Pipkin was continued on the New Orleans District, Benjamin M. Drake on the Natchez, and John Lane on the Vicksburg. No special changes were made in the pastoral charges of these districts, except Woodville was detached from Wilkinson Circuit and made a station, placed in the Natchez District, and William Winans appointed in charge; and the large circuit in the Vicksburg District heretofore known as Lake Providence was now called Carroll and Jephthah Hughes placed in charge, with the understanding that he should visit the settlements east of the Mississippi River about Lake Washington and as high up the river as he might have time to go. It was a severe trial to leave some of our promising fields unsupplied, especially where we had no local preachers.

Having made the matter a subject of earnest prayer to God, we accepted the appointment to Choctaw District as providential; and, returning to Washington, immediately hired a four-horse wagon to transport our household effects one hundred and twenty miles. As it was late in the season and winter weather had already set in, and we expected to camp out at night with our wagon, we left our family to go to Vicksburg by water, intending to hire a family conveyance to take them sixty miles into the interior. The weather was very severe on us as we progressed slowly over bad roads with our wagon. After getting north of Clinton, our wheels were several times so imbedded in mud that we had to extemporize levers and literally prize out. The weather cleared up about the end of our journey, and on a beautiful afternoon we arrived at the house of Eb-

enezer F. Divine, near where Sharon now stands, where we met a most cordial welcome, deposited our load, and sent the wagoner back. After arranging for the board of our family until we could have a house built, we hastened back to bring them on; but the weather was so rainy and the roads so cut up with the vast amount of wagoning to Vicksburg in those ante-railroad times that we could not take them out on wheels, and had to procure a sufficient number of horses to take us and our personal effects to our new home. It was a very trying journey, especially for the mother and two little boys; but she was wedded to the itinerancy, and received it as a part of her elected calling. The journey over, we found a home of peace and plenty with our former friend and neighbor, Kinsman Divine; and having several families of our former neighbors from Jefferson County—including that great and good man, Rev. Dr. B. W. M. Minter—immediately around us, our new country soon had a homelike appearance. Dr. Minter had donated to the Church sixty-two acres of land where the town of Sharon was soon afterwards built, twenty-five of which were for a presiding elder's parsonage. On this lot the district soon put up some plain but comfortable houses, where we spent four of the happiest and most useful years of our itinerant life. Our district was not large in the number of pastoral charges, but those acquainted with the geography of the country will see that it was vast in territory. It extended from the Bay of Biloxi on the south to Coffeetown on the north, and from Satartia on the west to the line of the Alabama Conference on the east; and being en-

tirely in the Choctaw Purchase, except White Sand Circuit, we had to be familiar with the imperfect roads, bridgeless and ferryless streams, and the ordinary inconveniences of a newly settled country. We were happy and successful in our work, and of course were well satisfied. Except our old preceptor, Ira Byrd, our district this year was filled up with young men; but most of them were the choice young ministers of the Conference, such as A. T. M. Fly, David M. Wiggins, William H. Watkins, and Elijah Steele.

It is but the repetition of a trite remark to say that our itinerancy is the best training school in the world to develop the talents of those who are truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ to preach the gospel. Young men who present themselves as candidates for the ministry are required to give the evidences of true piety and of a divine call to the office and work of the Christian ministry. They are at once put to the united study and practice of all that is implied in preaching the gospel. Let them learn the true import of a doctrine or duty of Christianity and go and preach it a dozen times to a dozen different congregations, and they will attain something like maturity in its delivery; and let them thus go on, step by step, over the whole field of theology, and in a few years they become able ministers of the New Testament. This was strikingly illustrated in the history of the four young men just mentioned.

Andrew T. M. Fly was born in 1812 in Sumner County, Tenn., and was born of the Spirit when twelve years old. He married when quite young,

and after much hesitancy on his part, at the age of twenty-one he was licensed to preach. During his early struggles on the subject of preaching he was frequently impressed with the thought that God had a work for him to do down South in the State of Mississippi, and the impression became so strong that he determined to move to the Chickasaw Purchase. As soon as he crossed the Tennessee line into Mississippi, he retired alone, and upon bended knee sought a full consecration to the work which he believed God designed him to do in this State. He settled in a short time somewhere in the indefinitely bounded Tallahatchie Mission, from which he was recommended for admission into the Conference, and was admitted at the session at Woodville and appointed in charge of Rankin Circuit. He was not at Conference; but as soon as he was notified of his field of labor he took his wife and three small children, with their personal effects, in a Jersey wagon and set off in the depth of winter across the country about one hundred and fifty miles to his circuit, Mr. Fly traveling much of the way on foot to relieve his overburdened horse. Arriving in his circuit, he obtained board for his wife and children and immediately entered upon his large work. Rankin Circuit in those days embraced all of Rankin County, with parts of Simpson, Smith, and Scott Counties—an ample field for a young itinerant. Mr. Fly was adequate to the task, and did faithful and effective work. He possessed a high order of intellect, and had received a good elementary education. Having been engaged to some extent in school-teaching, his mind was trained to close study and

critical observation. He spoke deliberately, clearly, and forcibly, and his sermons were pleasant to the ear and warming to the heart.

David M. Wiggins, now in his second year, was the colleague of Mr. Fly on Rankin Circuit. He was born September 1, 1812, in a very obscure part of Catahoula Parish, La., and grew up almost entirely destitute of both literary and religious training. He was in his eighteenth year when he first heard a sermon. Some months after that he was induced to attend a class meeting, and during the exercises he was effectually reminded of his condition as a sinner and the necessity of personal religion. His mind after that was no longer at rest. He felt that he was in a state of alienation from God. He soon after sought and obtained admission into the Church as a seeker of religion, but he groped in the darkness of unbelief for eighteen months before he obtained an assurance of the forgiveness of his sins. After he was brought into a state of favor with God, he began to take part in the class and prayer meetings in the way of prayer and exhortations. He felt the daily movings of the Spirit toward the gospel ministry, but such was his total want of all literary qualifications that he had a severe struggle before he could consent to admit his call to a work of such vast importance. Having no rest in spirit, he consented to try, and was licensed to exhort, and after exercising in this capacity six months was licensed to preach, and soon after was admitted on trial into the Conference. For the year 1835 he was appointed on Harrisonburg Circuit. Preston Cooper, his presiding elder, seeing his youth and unusually de-

fective education, united his circuit with Little River, so as to place William H. Turnley in charge of the whole and let David M. Wiggins act as junior preacher. The union of the two circuits made a ride of five hundred miles necessary every four weeks to accomplish a round. This gave young Wiggins ample employment, and he was very industrious in attending to his private devotions, slowly reading and studying his Bible and some of our elementary theological books, singing, praying, and—well, not preaching in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but telling the people that “religion is a mighty good thing to live and die with,” and urging them by motives drawn from heaven and hell to seek it. Such was the childlike simplicity of his earnest piety that he had the respect and confidence of the people generally, notwithstanding his very deficient education. During the first part of the year he seemed never to have comprehended the idea that there is a necessary connection between a text and a sermon. He would go through the form of taking a text and immediately wander off into a disjointed exhortation, saying just what his warm heart prompted him to say, without any reference to systematic arrangement. David M. Wiggins was a most incessant student. He filled some of our most important circuits, was a presiding elder eighteen years, a member of the General Conference of 1858, and died a chaplain in the Confederate States Army in 1862.

William H. Watkins, the junior preacher this year on Madison Circuit, was a native of Jefferson County, Miss. He was converted in his youth in the vicinity of old, historic Cambridge Church,

near which his parents lived, and where he received the training of those "old disciples" who have been the honored instruments of bringing so many young men into the ministry. Mr. Watkins had a fair elementary education, with a mind capable of great improvement, which he diligently cultivated. He is the first native Mississippian of any Church who received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, which title he has worn with credit many years. He has now (1875) been on the effective list in our Conference, without a single break, forty-one years.

Elijah Steele was born of pious parents in humble circumstances in Williamson County, Tenn., April 3, 1814. His father became permanently demented, and in this great affliction was more than useless in the support of his family. About 1826 his mother, with her four children, moved to Marion County, Miss., where she settled on a small farm which she and her little sons cultivated with their own hands. She was not able to do much for her children in the way of a literary education, but she succeeded well in bringing them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In the tender season of youth Elijah was awakened, converted, and called to the work of the ministry. He certainly possessed, as the gift of nature's God, extraordinary intellectual powers, with a mind capable of very rapid improvement. It is true he was remarkably studious; but he acquired knowledge with a celerity quite uncommon, and had the gift of expressing what he learned in appropriate language and in an eloquent and forcible style. He was tall and spare, his mouth was large, and his nose handsomely mold-

ed, but quite above the common size, giving a striking prominence to his features; his countenance was decidedly intellectual, and to the end of his life wore a youthful appearance. He was remarkably industrious in every department of his holy calling. His plans were always laid beforehand, and it required all his time and physical and mental strength to keep up with them. In his spirit and manners he was as unsophisticated as innocent childhood, but in his mental and physical labors he had the energy of a young giant. As heretofore stated, he was appointed to Sineasha Mission. *Sine*, in Choctaw, means "snake," and *asha* "yonder"—snake yonder—and is the Indian name of a large creek emptying into Big Black River from the southwestern part of Attala County. Several Methodist families settled on its waters at an early day, and it gave name to a considerable scope of country; but it conveys a very imperfect idea of the boundaries of the mission, which embraced all of Leake and Attala Counties, with skirts of other adjoining new counties. In many places the people had not been there long enough to raise a provision crop, and it was often difficult to get corn for horses there in 1836. Where Kosciusko now stands there was a straggling village which had borne the name of Paris until that year, when it was changed to its present name. Mr. Steele was a faithful pioneer, and went everywhere preaching the word.

The people had flocked into the Chickasaw Purchase so rapidly that it was thought best to form them into a district, which was called Chickasaw Mission District, with Robert Alexander in charge.

He had under his care three missionary circuits of very indefinite boundaries, called Tallahatchie, Chickasaw, and Cold Water. Samuel W. Spear was on the first, Joseph P. Snead on the second, and William Craig on the third. Charles J. Carney was continued in the superintendency of the Choctaw Mission West, with only Moses Perry as his assistant; but there were now numerous local preachers among the natives, so that the work was fairly supplied.

By attaching the Alexandria District to the Arkansas Conference, the Mississippi Conference lost six hundred and ninety-five white and one hundred and eighty-nine colored members, and by attaching the Choctaw Mission West to the same Conference the Mississippi Conference lost one thousand and nineteen Indian members, which left for the present an aggregate membership of five thousand five hundred and eighty-nine white, one thousand eight hundred and forty-one colored, and eighty-three Indian members in the East. There was such a perpetual moving about of the members to the new countries that it was exceedingly difficult to keep the statistics correctly. The revolution in Texas having been successful, and the province erected into an independent republic, modeled after the government of the United States, a large emigration from Mississippi set off in that direction late in the year, by which many members, both white and colored, ceased to be reported until, in after years, they were reorganized in Texas.

CHAPTER XV.

1836.

THE Mississippi Conference assembled at Vicksburg December 7, 1836. Bishop Thomas A. Morris was present, and opened the Conference with the usual religious exercises. This was Bishop Morris's first visit to the Conference. He was admitted on trial into the Ohio Conference which met at Louisville, Ky., September 3, 1816. After traveling five years in the Ohio Conference, he fell into the Kentucky Conference (soon after its organization), where he traveled seven additional years, and was then transferred back to the Ohio Conference, where he continued in the itinerant work six years, and was then elected editor of the *Western Christian Advocate*, published at Cincinnati. During the eighteen years of his itinerancy he labored on large circuits, in town and city stations, and on districts. He was a man of medium height, compactly built, quite muscular, and, after the middle of life, decidedly corpulent. In his social intercourse he was rather taciturn and cautious, and usually spoke with deliberation. His education was not showy, but solid and elegant. He was a polished and forcible writer, and his style of preaching was purely Wesleyan. His sermons were short, well arranged, to the point, and often attended with much of the holy unction with-

out any apparent effort on his part. Preaching was with him an easy task. His sermons kept up a most enjoyable interest in his congregations. As a presiding officer he was modest, quiet, firm, and ready. His judgment in planning the work and stationing the preachers was of the highest order. Before the General Conference of 1836 the numerical strength of the Church had become so great in the West that there was a growing demand for the election of a Western man to the episcopacy. "If this should be done," said Bishop Soule, "I know no man west of the mountains better qualified for the episcopacy than Thomas A. Morris. His educational and religious qualifications are without fault, and he is practically acquainted with all the details of itinerant life." In this matter, as well as all others, Bishop Soule showed the characteristic superiority of his judgment. Bishop Morris was elected and consecrated to the episcopal office at the General Conference of 1836, and was a great favorite in the Mississippi Conference up to the division of the Church, in 1844, after which his face was no more seen at this Conference.

Robert D. Smith was again elected Secretary, and the Conference immediately proceeded to the appointment of the usual committees, after which, under the first question, thirteen were admitted on trial, and among them Jesse Ginn, heretofore mentioned in connection with the remarkable conversion of himself and wife. He had itinerated several years, had been regularly admitted on trial, and graduated to full membership in the Conference before his final location. He has always and every-

where been a very reliable man, both as a member and minister of the Church, and at a late date was still alive in Northern Louisiana, at a remarkably advanced age.

Eleven were continued on trial; four were received into full connection and ordained deacons; four were ordained elders; David O. Shattuck, Thomas P. Davidson, John W. Ellis, and John N. Maffitt, late of the Tennessee Conference, were readmitted, as were also Washington Ford and James Applewhite, late of our Conference; Bradford Frazee, formerly of the Ohio but late of the Kentucky Conference, was received by transfer; Needham B. Raiford, William M. Curtiss, Orsamus L. Nash, and Thomas Nixon were located at their own request, and John G. Parker was located by a vote of the Conference; Levi Pearce, who had been transferred back to us from the Arkansas Conference, was discontinued at his own request; Brice M. Hughes was also discontinued; Joseph P. Snead was granted a supernumerary relation, and William V. Douglass that of a superannuate; sixteen local preachers were elected to deacon's orders and two to elder's. About this time there was quite an accession both to the itinerant and local ranks, which was a substantial evidence of continued prosperity.

No member of the Conference had died the preceding year. Zachariah Wilson, a probationer in his first year, in charge of Concordia Circuit, had died in the midst of his zealous labors and usefulness, "with bright prospects for a better world," as stated by Mr. Drake, his presiding elder. Mr. Wilson was living in Port Gibson during our pastorate

there in 1830. He had no family but a wife, was poor in worldly substance, and followed wagoning between Port Gibson and Grand Gulf; but his character, both as a citizen and a member of the Church, was utterly without reproach. He was gifted in prayer and exhortation, and was lively and useful in all the social meetings of the Church. He was highly appreciated by the ministers and members generally on account of his deep and uniform piety and his untiring zeal in striving to promote the Redeemer's kingdom. After due examination as to his preliminary qualifications, he was licensed to preach; and feeling a strong desire to give the remainder of his life wholly to the work of the ministry, he was recommended from the Quarterly Conference of Port Gibson and was admitted into the itinerancy. His age, talents, and, above all, his well-known piety and active zeal justified his being placed in charge of a circuit his first year. Brice M. Hughes, his colleague, failed to come to his assistance, which left him all the work to do on a large circuit. The abundance of his labors in a swamp atmosphere overtaxed his physical powers and he fell at his post under the prevailing fever of the country. He died and was buried at Waterproof. He left the savor of a good name.

At this Conference, on motion of William Winans, the initial steps were taken to identify the lost graves of Tobias Gibson and Richmond Nolley—the former in Warren County, Miss., and the latter in Catahoula Parish, La.—and to mark them with suitable monuments. After long delay, both graves were identified and a monument erected at Mr.

Gibson's. There is something suggestive in a monument with a suitable inscription at the grave of a faithful minister. It produces holy thoughts and heavenly aspirations.

Those who were heretofore so much in favor of a manual labor school now began to realize that the project was a failure; but, being in the majority, they now rallied under the idea "of establishing one or more academies for the instruction of males, to be under the direction and patronage of the Conference." A committee of five, consisting of John Lane, B. M. Drake, B. A. Houghton, Robert Alexander, and David O. Shattuck, was appointed to take the subject under advisement and report to the Conference. The committee reported favorably, at least as to one academy, to be established in Warren County, and John Lane was appointed, with plenary authority, to superintend its establishment. It was never established. It was not such an institution as a large and influential minority wished to see established. While the present majority, headed by William Winans, were in favor of high classical academies as feeders of a future college, an influential minority were decidedly in favor of establishing a college proper at once. The country was in a very prosperous financial condition, and the time was thought to be auspicious for building a college. After a spirited discussion on the college question, a motion to appoint an agent to proceed at once to the collection of funds to found a college was lost, and a resolution passed to continue patronage to LAGRANGE and to invite the agents appointed by the Tennessee Conference, especially Rev. Phineas T.

Scagg, into the territory of the Mississippi Conference to solicit subscriptions and donations for that college. They did not realize much money from Mississippi for Lagrange. The patrons of our Church had become quite dissatisfied with sending their money to build institutions of learning abroad which were quite out of the reach of most of the people. Though the minority in favor of a home college were defeated for the present, they were determined to persevere until success crowned their efforts. So many of the former patrons of Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss., had moved away to the new countries that it began to show evident signs of decay. A committee was appointed to inquire into the feasibility of raising two thousand dollars as an endowment fund for the academy to assist in paying current expenses. The committee reported, but the journal does not show what the report was. The very modest endowment asked for was never raised.

The Mississippi Conference was allowed to draw on the Book Concern for four hundred dollars and on the Chartered Fund for seventy dollars, and received three hundred dollars' interest on the bequest of bank stock by William Foster. These sums, added to other resources, enabled the stewards to pay the claimants two-thirds of their claim.

As usual, an ample box of substantial clothing was received from the Ladies' Sewing Society at Natchez, for which obligations were gratefully acknowledged through Bradford Frazee. The presiding elders composed the committee of distribution.

John N. Maffitt and William Winans were request-

ed to act as agents for the collection of funds to complete the church on Poydras Street in New Orleans. Some fault was found with Mr. Maffitt's paper in Natchez, but it was still commended to patronage. The General Conference at its late session determined to establish at Nashville a Church paper, to be called the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, for the special benefit of the four Conferences in the extreme Southwest. It was very cordially accepted as our Conference organ. It succeeded, or was rather a continuation and extension of, the *Western Methodist*. Rev. Thomas Stringfield was elected editor by the General Conference.

The Conference still kept watch over the rich harvest soon to be reaped by missionary operations in Texas. The work had been going on in a desultory way for several years, and two years ago Henry Stephenson was sent as a regular missionary to the province. The exciting and bloody revolution at that time had seriously disjointed all plans. The decisive battle of San Jacinto had been fought, the revolutionists were completely successful, and Texas was being rapidly erected into an independent republic into which Protestantism would be freely admitted. Missionary operations in that inviting field were resumed. The bishop presiding at the New York Conference had charge of the foreign missionary work, and the Mississippi Conference formally recommended him "to establish a mission, or missions, in Texas as soon as the state of things in that country would admit of it." Bishop Morris was furnished with a certified copy of this recommendation and requested to forward it to the presiding

bishop of the New York Conference. This recommendation, in connection with numerous appeals from local preachers and lay members already settled in Texas, hastened the appointment of three missionaries to the republic in the summer of 1837. They were Martin Ruter, D.D., Robert Alexander, and Littleton Fowler. Doctor Ruter had entered the New York Conference in 1801, when but sixteen years old. He had filled a large number of very important pastoral charges and other responsible positions in the Church during the thirty-six years which intervened between the time of his admission on trial and that of his appointment as Superintendent of the Texas Mission.

Mr. Alexander was at this time a member of the Mississippi Conference, and was stationed for the second year in the city of Natchez.

Mr. Fowler had belonged to the Kentucky Conference; but was now in the Tennessee Conference, acting as agent for Lagrange College.

These brethren had all signified their willingness to go as missionaries to Texas, and as soon as they were notified of their appointment by Bishop Hedding, presiding bishop at the New York Conference, began their preparation for their new field.

Mr. Alexander, being nearest to the field, was the first to enter. He crossed the Sabine in August of this year (1837), and had held two camp meetings when Mr. Fowler arrived, about six weeks later. On the 21st of November Dr. Ruter crossed the Sabine at Gaines Ferry, where he met Mr. Alexander on his way to the Mississippi Conference. Not only the Methodists in Texas but the citizens generally

had great cause of gratulation at the appointment of three such ministers to their young republic. They were men of the highest order of talents, and were stimulated to untiring activity by the deepest piety.

Our itinerant system is the best for a rapid and successful spread of the gospel. While other denominations were anxiously looking around for men and means to supply Texas, and were waiting for a call to invite them here and there, the Methodists had a corps of minutemen ready to mount their horses and enter the field, regardless of a special call from any community or the promise of a competent salary. Hence they had entered and taken possession of the field, already white unto the harvest, while others were getting ready to begin the work.

From this date Texas will furnish very interesting Conference history.

A resolution in the Journal of this Conference session requests the Bishop to appoint Thomas Owens as Agent for the Preachers' Fund Society of the Mississippi Conference. This affords an opportunity long desired to give a short history of that once useful but now defunct Society. From the organization of the Conference the members often felt the need of an extra fund, outside of the usual funds, to relieve extra-necessitous cases. About 1824 Thomas Owens proposed that we raise a fund by voluntary contributions, to be invested with the Chartered Fund of the Methodist Episcopal Church, located in Philadelphia, and by the trustees of that Fund to be loaned on interest on good security, and the interest, when collected, to be added to our an-

nual claim on the Chartered Fund and drawn with it, to be applied by the Conference to extreme, necessitous cases. A correspondence was opened with the trustees of the Chartered Fund as to the practicability of the project, whereupon they informed us that it could not be done on account of some alleged difficulties. Mr. Owens then proposed that we form a Preachers' Fund Society, with the requisite officers, constitution, and by-laws, like our Missionary Society; but to transact all its business outside of and independent of the Conference. The object was to raise and perpetuate a fund for the relief of necessitous cases among the itinerant preachers from the interest of the Fund. A constitution was drawn up, specifying the object of the Society and enacting fundamental laws for its government. The standing officers were to be a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and five directors, elected annually by the Society. Each member of the Society was required to pay five dollars into the treasury annually in order to perpetuate his membership, with the privilege of collecting it, in whole or in part, from the people of his charge. When any member had completed the payment of one hundred dollars to the Fund, he was then recorded a life member, entitled to all the privileges of membership without any further contribution. Most of the preachers became members of the Society, and in a few years we were able to donate annually to necessitous cases (examined and reported as such to the Society by the Board of Directors) several hundred dollars. It was made the duty of the Board of Directors to audit all accounts, loan out the capital

annually on good security, collect the interest when due and place it in the hands of the Treasurer to be drawn out on their order, and in all matters to act as the Executive Committee of the Society and report their doings to the same.

The meetings were held at such hours as the Conference was not in session, and everything went on smoothly and prosperously for many years. The Fund was required to be loaned to private individuals in small sums until it should increase to perhaps five thousand dollars, when it was to be invested in stock in some safe bank or other monetary institution. The business of our Society was transacted with the strictest integrity, and the Fund was sacred to religious purposes and no one seemed to think of using it in any other way.

As we from time to time set off Conferences or parts of Conferences, we gave our departing brethren their *pro rata* share of the Fund. John A. Cotton was with us at this time to receive the *pro rata* share of the Louisiana District, lately detached from our Conference and added to that of Arkansas. Our Society prospered until about 1838, at which time we had accumulated ten or eleven thousand dollars. The Mississippi banks were already showing such signs of a speedy collapse that we were afraid to trust our Fund in them, and still kept it loaned out, mostly to the preachers.

About 1838-39 the country was being flooded with the dubious paper of real estate banks and a fractional currency vulgarly called "shinplasters," and most of the dues to the Preachers' Fund Society were paid in that currency. We knew that it was not to

be relied upon long at a time; and while we were deliberating what to do for the best in order to save our Fund, several of our prominent ministers (some of them esteemed the most wealthy in the Conference) came forward and said they owed debts which they could pay with the currency on hand, and proposed to borrow the whole in large sums. We let them have it on what was considered good security; and, so far as we know, they used the currency as they intended—in the liquidation of their debts. The financial crash of 1840 swept over the country, the banks of all descriptions broke, and the “shinplasters” became worthless. Several of our brethren who had borrowed largely of our Fund fell behind in their finances and craved the privilege of simply renewing their notes at long intervals, in some instances, without paying even the annual interest. We kept the Fund in reasonably fair operation, however, until after the division of the Church, in 1844.

Benjamin A. Houghton, who had long been the Secretary of the Society, and had charge of our constitution and by-laws, the roll of members, and all our journals, was the only preacher in our Conference who adhered to the Northern Church. He ceased to attend our annual sessions, and never turned over to us our Society records. He died in a few years, and none of our documents were ever recovered. Our Treasurer, however, held the notes due the Society, and as far as the interest could be collected it was appropriated according to the original intention of the Association. In the meantime some who had borrowed our money located or

went to other Conferences, and either could not refund the money or lost sight of their obligation to pay us, while others died and left their estates so embarrassed that we never could collect what was due our Fund; and some few, who are yet living, plead their inability to make payment. After 1850 the members of the Society became very careless about attending the annual meetings, especially some who were largely indebted to it but had not sufficiently recovered from the late financial disasters to make payment, and for several years the operations of the Society were suspended.

About 1858 it was ascertained that we still had, after all our losses, a fund of six or seven thousand dollars in notes that we considered would be ultimately good. The writer reproduced from memory our lost constitution and by-laws, called a meeting of what few of the original stockholders were still available, and reorganized the Society, adopted the reproduced constitution and by-laws, and induced the Conference to take the organization under its special care. We now had a fair prospect of starting our little, unpretending association on its former career of usefulness; but presently the disastrous War between the States came on, and deranged and ruined the finances of our country. The business of the Society was again completely suspended, and those who were indebted to it were financially ruined. To make our condition still more hopeless, the Treasurer, in an effort to conceal the notes due the Society from the marauding Federal soldiers, put them where they became so mildewed as to be illegible and almost decomposed.

After the war was over, there was a full discussion of the subject at Conference, and the Society decided to dissolve.

If any who are indebted to the Society should ever be able to pay this just and honorable debt, the Conference will gladly receive it and make any necessary arrangement to give it the direction of the original donors. The writer was long a life member of the Society, and, knowing how useful it was, would be glad to see it revived again.

During the prosperous days of our Preachers' Fund Society, when there came to Conference a faithful fellow-laborer who had lost his horse, or from other causes was in need of from fifty to three or four hundred dollars, we knew where to get it for him, not as a loan to embarrass him again at a future time, but as a donation to send him on his new circuit unembarrassed.

After collecting the interest a few times on the thirty shares of stock in the Planters' Bank of the State of Mississippi, bequeathed to us by our greatly esteemed brother, William Foster, of Pine Ridge, the bank utterly failed, and we lost it all.

From the history of the Preachers' Fund Society, which had an existence of forty years, with two intervals of suspension, we have learned a few things, and among them that Methodist preachers as a class are not always successful financiers. Their financial plans are sometimes very defective and cause their ultimate failure.

In view of the constantly widening territory, especially since Texas became an open field, we set apart two days—one in January and the other in

September—as days of fasting and prayer for the prosperity of the Church, and that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more laborers.

After fixing upon Natchez as the place of our next annual session, the appointments were read and Conference adjourned.

Such was the scarcity of laborers in our vast field that an unusual number of pastoral charges were left to be supplied by local brethren. Samuel W. Spear was sent to New Orleans and LaFayette Mission, with one to be supplied. Lafourche, Sandy Creek, and Springfield, in the New Orleans District, were left to be supplied. Elias R. Porter was stationed in Baton Rouge, and Thomas Clinton was appointed to the Wilkinson Colored Mission. A. D. Wooldridge was continued as professor of languages in the Louisiana College at Jackson, and William Winans and John N. Maffitt were appointed agents to collect funds to complete the Poydras Street Church, in New Orleans. Benjamin M. Drake was continued on the Natchez District; and while there was a general change of preachers, there was but little change in the construction of the pastoral charges. Bradford Frazee, our late transfer from the Kentucky Conference, was appointed President of Elizabeth Female Academy; Charles K. Marshall was stationed at Woodville, and Elijah Steele at Port Gibson and Hebron. Elias R. Porter, a man of commanding personal appearance and pulpit abilities, had preceded him. Mr. Porter found the church edifice in Port Gibson unfinished and without a belfry. The first church bell ever brought to Port Gibson was a small but well-toned bell, pre-

sented to our Church in 1830 by Dr. Arva Wilson. In the construction of the church no arrangement had been made for the suspension of a bell. To remedy this, the brethren went to the woods and hewed a couple of long shafts, which they framed together and planted firmly in the ground in the rear of the church, and upon which they suspended the bell. This unique structure henceforth took the name of "the gallows," upon which hung the Methodist church bell. Mr. Porter was not pleased with the unfinished condition of his church, and was particularly troubled with the appearance of the venerable "gallows," which had stood the weather, unsheltered, for seven years. He went to work diligently in the collection of funds to improve the material condition of his Church; and being personally popular, in addition to his eloquence in the pulpit, he soon raised the required sum to finish the church tastefully inside and to surmount it with a beautiful steeple.

Soon after Conference, having some business down south of Port Gibson, we called to spend the evening with Mr. Steele in his room where he boarded, and we found him oppressed with what he considered his want of qualifications for such an important post as the bishop had assigned him. Said he: "Brother Jones, you know how limited my education is and how poorly I am qualified to succeed such a talented man as Elias R. Porter, and to sustain the honor of the gospel and of our Church in one of the most intelligent and wealthy communities in the country, where they have often enjoyed the privilege of hearing the most talented ministers of all denominations." We replied: "You are not here by your

own choice, but in obedience to authority which you have promised to obey. Do not say one word to a human being about your limited education; let him make the discovery himself, if he can. Pursue your course of study diligently, and prepare your sermons with as much thoughtful care as you can; and then, with your heart all aglow with the love of God and precious souls, preach to them with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the probability is that the people will know but little about your defective education." He became one of the most popular preachers ever stationed in Port Gibson. His unfeigned and glowing piety, exhibited everywhere, secured for him the respect and confidence of the people, while his eloquence in the pulpit attracted them to his congregations. His congregation at Hebron decided to build a better church in a more central and accessible locality, and they named it Steele Chapel, in honor of their talented young pastor. It still perpetuates his name as one of the principal Churches on Rocky Spring Circuit.

Robert D. Smith succeeded John Lane on the Vicksburg District. Joseph Travis was stationed in Vicksburg. In this district appears the name of Green M. Rogers, on the Raymond Circuit. We received by transfer from the Tennessee Conference four valuable preachers: Green M. Rogers, Robert S. Collins, William Pearson, and John D. Neal, the three latter receiving appointments in the new district of Holly Springs.

The late General Conference readjusted the line between this and the Alabama Conference by striking out "the dividing Ridge between Pearl and Leaf

Rivers, and thence with said Ridge between the waters of the Mississippi and Tombigbee Rivers to the Tennessee line," and inserting as the boundary between the two Conferences the western boundary of the eastern range of counties in the State of Mississippi. This readjustment left in the Alabama Conference nine of the eastern counties of Mississippi, and turned over to the Mississippi Conference three of the old counties embraced in the old Leaf River Circuit and six or eight counties in the Choctaw Purchase, which gave a large scope of country to be supplied at this session of Conference. This acquisition of territory, with the necessity of forming a number of new circuits in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Purchases, made it necessary to remodel the Choctaw and Chickasaw Districts and to form a new district in the southeastern part of the Conference, called Monticello, with Benjamin A. Houghton as presiding elder. This new district took Pearl River Circuit from the Natchez District and White Sand and Rankin from the Choctaw District, to which were added Pearlington and Leaf River Circuits, on the Gulf Coast, and Newton and Louisville, in the Choctaw Purchase. The two latter circuits were in new territory, which had only been partially visited by the itinerants, and were of vast dimensions, each including several new counties. The Church was greatly indebted to a number of faithful local preachers for supplying this lately acquired territory on the eastern boundary of the Monticello District. At this time Ransom J. Jones, Sr., was in a local relation in Jasper County, and no man contributed more to the preservation and extension

of the Church in that region than he. How changed is all that country now! Full of circuits of small dimensions, and full of preachers, with a large membership. This also God hath wrought through our instrumentality as a Conference.

The town of Sharon, in Madison County, Miss., had been projected mainly for educational purposes, and was being built up all around the presiding elder's parsonage, which suggested the idea of exchanging the indefinite name of Choctaw for that of Sharon District. The writer was continued in charge of it. It had been considerably remodeled. Madisonville and Canton were taken from Madison Circuit and made a separate charge, with Preston Cooper as pastor. A colored mission was also established within the bounds of Madison Circuit. Benton and Manchester (now Yazoo City) were detached from Yazoo Circuit, and Jephthah Hughes was appointed in charge. The Yalobusha Circuit of last year was divided into Carroll and Yalobusha Circuits. Enos Fletcher, a local preacher, was employed to reconnoiter Choctaw County and form a circuit in that unoccupied region.

One of the early preachers came near being lost in that wilderness county. Milton H. Jones, on Carroll Circuit, had taken in a part of Choctaw County. The dividing ridge between the waters of Big Black and Yalobusha Rivers in places becomes almost mountainous, and was a famous place for wild animals. One evening, after the sun went down, Mr. Jones was riding leisurely along toward a settlement he had in view, where he expected to spend the night, when he suddenly met a panther in the path. The

beast not seeming much disposed to vacate the path, Mr. Jones sprang forward and yelled at the top of his voice, at which the panther sprang a little to one side and let him pass, but immediately turned in behind him and commenced a close pursuit, whereupon Mr. Jones put whip to his horse and dashed off at a rapid gait. The panther also increased his speed, and by long and rapid bounds kept within a few rods of him. It was now becoming a race of life or death, and he put his horse to the top of his speed. After going, as he thought, a sufficient distance to outwind his hungry pursuer, and as he was descending an eastern slope, he drew up his horse and looked back, when by the twilight he saw the form of the panther on the crest of the ridge above him, still leaping forward in vigorous pursuit. He now concluded that there was no time to be lost in looking back, and adopted for his future movements, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee!" Nor did he slacken his gait or look back again until he had reached his destination in safety.

The name of Sineasha Mission was discontinued, and Attala Circuit took its place, still occupying the extensive territory of the Mission. In Jackson, the capital of the State, little had been accomplished. Thomas Ford was appointed there as missionary. Mr. Ford lived at a distance of eight or ten miles, giving every alternate Sabbath to the capital. At the appointed time on Saturday morning he presiding elder was on hand, but Mr. Ford did not come, nor did any one know that a quarterly meeting was contemplated. We sought an introduction to Major Mallory, who was State Auditor

and kept the principal hotel in the place, and whose wife was an excellent member of our Church. On making known the object of our visit, we were informed that the only available place for preaching was the little brick house occupied by the Legislature, and that, as it was then in session, we would have to wait for its adjournment to Monday. The Legislature adjourned soon after twelve o'clock, whereupon Mrs. Mallory had the hotel and State-house bells rung for preaching at four o'clock. At this hour we preached the best sermon we could to one man and four ladies, and appointed preaching at night. Then we had about twelve in the house, and, judging from the noise, about a score just outside who seemed to have imbibed freely at a drinking saloon near by. Soon after the service commenced the outsiders began to yell and hoot, interspersed with loud "amens" and other words used in religious worship. We requested our little audience to keep composed until the services were concluded, as we did not intend to be interrupted by the noise outside, and announced two services for the Sabbath.

As we returned to the hotel, Mrs. Mallory remarked that this was our first visit to Jackson, and, after the treatment received, she feared it would be our last. We assured her that her fears were groundless; that we were somewhat familiar with such repulses; that the conduct of those young men demonstrated the fact that they greatly needed the reforming and saving influences of the gospel, and ought to have them; and that we were more determined now than ever that our Church should make a firm stand in Jackson.

We had a full congregation on Sunday morning and again at night, without further interruption. God, in his merciful lovingkindness, soon raised up a few faithful members and patrons of our Church in the capital, who took the matter in hand with praiseworthy liberality. In the summer of 1839 they finished the church edifice (in which our congregations in Jackson still worship) in time to hold the District Convention, which was to make arrangements for the centennial celebration the ensuing fall. From that day to this Methodism has had a name and local habitation in the capital of our State.

Our large missionary circuits in the Chickasaw Purchase, grown into self-supporting circuits, had so filled up that it was necessary to divide them. The whole Chickasaw territory was readjusted, and to the district and pastoral charges were given geographical names to designate their location. Chickasaw was changed to Holly Springs as the name of the district. Holly Springs and Chulahoma were divided into Holly Springs Circuit, Salem, Oxford Mission, Pontotoc, Grenada and Coffeeville, and Coffeeville Circuit. With the exception of Edward R. Burton, the entire district was supplied with preachers lately from Tennessee. David O. Shattuck was appointed presiding elder, with a noble corps of preachers under his charge. There need be no surprise that Methodism took such a deep hold in the Chickasaw Purchase so soon after its first settlement.

Camp meetings were very popular, and under the Divine blessing added greatly to the prosperity of

the Church. Those extraordinary bodily exercises which were common at revival meetings had nearly ceased. Notwithstanding the limited supply of laborers, three transferred to other Conferences. Seymour B. Sawyer was transferred to the Alabama Conference, and Cotman Methvin and Henry B. Price to the Arkansas Conference.

The General Minutes show an increase of one thousand three hundred and forty-one white members, and a decrease of two hundred and fifty-four colored and ten Indian members. This decrease of colored and Indian members is readily explained. A large number of planters, owning from a few to hundreds of negroes, having become hopelessly involved in debt in the great financial crash which was now being felt over the whole country, were running their negroes secretly to the republic of Texas; and of the few Indians left in our State, numbers were annually removing to the West. A noted local preacher by the name of Toblychubby, with his family and connections, removed to the West, and after making one crop was so well pleased that he sent a pressing message to the remainder of his tribe in the East to leave the piny woods of Mississippi and come to the fertile lands in the Indian Territory. As an evidence of the superior quality of the soil, he sent word that he had raised a pumpkin weighing seventy pounds.

CHAPTER XVI.

1837

THE Mississippi Conference met at Natchez December 6, 1837. Bishop Andrew was present, and opened the Conference with the usual religious devotions. Robert D. Smith, the former Secretary, being absent at the opening session, Joseph Travis was elected Secretary and Samuel L. L. Scott Assistant Secretary. For the first time the Conference needed an Assistant Secretary as one of the permanent officers. The first volume of journals, beginning in 1813, is now full, and Secretary Travis is instructed to purchase, at the expense of the Conference, a new journal ledger, and also a suitable trunk for the safe-keeping and transportation of the journals and other Conference documents. The little old journal book of four hundred and two pages, seven and a half inches in length and six inches in width, had ridden to Conference a quarter of a century in the Secretary's saddlebags; but now the day of small things is past in journalistic economy as well as in other departments, and the venerable book must be succeeded by a fine ledger, thirteen by eight and a half inches, to be kept and transported in a Conference trunk. The old journal abides in the trunk also, and is preserved with great care. The records of the new journal book are very legibly

written on good paper, without the crowding either of words or lines, and with few abbreviations. The Secretary was a good composer and penman.

The standing committees having been appointed, the regular questions were taken up. Under the first question nine were admitted on trial—**Edwin Phillips**, **Bennett A. Truly**, **Lorenzo D. Langford**, **Robert W. Kennon**, **John G. Deskin**, **William G. Gould**, **William B. Walker**, **Mathew Ramsey**, and **James C. Finley**. Ten were continued on trial; six were received into full connection and elected to deacon's orders; five were elected elders; **Nathaniel R. Jarratt**, formerly of the Tennessee Conference, and **Charles J. Carney**, formerly of ours but late of the Arkansas Conference, were readmitted. We received as transfers **John M. Holland** and **Samuel M. Kingston** from the Tennessee, **Laban C. Cheney** from the New York, and **Jefferson Hamilton** from the New England Conference. The Bishop transferred **Richard Angell** to the Alabama and **Jephthah Hughes** to the Arkansas Conference; **James Watson**, **Preston Cooper**, **Stephen Herrin**, and **Thomas P. Davidson** located; **William B. Harper** and **William Neill** were discontinued, and **Edward R. Burton** and **Thomas Ford** were discontinued at their own request; **Hardy Mullins** was declared supernumerary and **Jesse Lee** and **William V. Douglass** superannuated. Eight local preachers were elected to deacon's and five to elder's orders. Some of each class had now entered the itinerancy. In the examination of character there was little difficulty. Two or three of the undergraduates were admonished to be more diligent in their studies, and the

same number were complained of for leaving their work at intervals under various, insufficient pretexts.

Bradford Frazee had some difficulty at Washington which the journal does not specify, and which required that his case be referred to the presiding elder for investigation, pending which he was left without an appointment. Absalom D. Wooldridge, who had been appointed from year to year to a professorship in the Jackson (Louisiana) College, had embraced Unitarianism, and by his request was permitted to withdraw from our Church.

Mr. Travis is careful to state in the journal that each daily session of the Conference was closed with prayer. This was the invariable rule of all the older bishops. They acknowledged the necessity of having the Divine guidance in all deliberations and his blessing on all business, and they thought the time well spent in having some brother lead in prayer at the end of each session. Afterwards the doxology and the short apostolic benediction came into great requisition as the concluding service of all our Church Conferences, and in some instances of our stated public worship. The former usage is the better.

A judicious committee of three was appointed to select and destroy all useless papers in the archives of the Conference.

As the Conference was still depended upon to assist in finishing and paying for the church on Poydras Street, in New Orleans, the building committee sent a report of what had been done and what remained to be done to complete the enterprise. The

Conference appointed Jefferson Hamilton, William Winans, and John Lane a committee to take the subject under advisement, and their report was adopted by the Conference. The Church was still considerably in debt, as the services of Mr. Maffitt were in requisition as a collecting agent.

A letter was received from Miss M. S. Chapman, Corresponding Secretary of the Female Benevolent Society of Woodville, inclosing seventy-five dollars, with a request that the Bishop appropriate it to the cause of foreign missions as he might see proper.

The Female Sewing Society of Natchez and Washington sent, as usual, a box of clothing, with eighty-one dollars in money, to be distributed among the most necessitous preachers. The presiding elders were the committee of distribution, and returned warmest thanks to the kind donors.

Our Conference Missionary Society during this time had not been inactive. With such men as John Lane, William Winans, and B. M. Drake at the head of the Society, it could not become inactive. Though much of home work was missionary work, the Conference was still alive to the general cause of missions, held anniversary meetings, and encouraged the formation of auxiliary societies everywhere.

Rev. Leroy Swormstedt was present as a collecting agent of the Western Book Concern, at Cincinnati, pressing his claims with his usual pertinacity. Mr. Swormstedt was a great favorite in the Mississippi Conference, especially with those who were fortunate in not owing his publishing house anything. We loved to hear him pray and preach, and to wit-

ness his warm, religious feelings as manifested in our meetings for worship.

There was some just complaint against a few of our itinerants in the New Purchase for neglecting their work to engage in land agencies, which occasioned the passage of the following resolution, to wit:

Resolved, That this Conference highly disapprove of any member of the Conference engaging in any business which would hinder him in the faithful performance of his duty, except in those cases where the Conference has been previously notified.

The currency of Mississippi was so much under par that the Book Agents at New York were unwilling to receive it in payment for books and periodicals, and requested that it be invested in cotton by an experienced agent and the cotton be shipped to them. John Lane had been a cotton factor, and was appointed to this new and unprecedented agency, and also to receive from the Book Committee all claims in favor of the Book Concern and to enforce their collection as early as possible.

The importance of establishing a Church paper farther down in the Southwest than Nashville was felt, and the presiding elder of the New Orleans District, the stationed preacher in New Orleans, the presiding elder of the Natchez District, Hon. Edward McGehee, and William M. Curtis were appointed a committee with plenary power to establish such paper under the control of the Conference as soon as they should judge proper. This was doubtless the initial step toward establishing the *New Orleans Christian Advocate* a few years subsequently.

As it was believed that every traveling preacher ought to be a member of a Quarterly Conference, the Conference resolved that superannuated preachers and agents of the Conference, and all preachers left without appointments at their own request, are members of the Quarterly Conference where they reside. Bishop Andrew was called on officially to decide whether more than four Quarterly Conferences could legally be held in any circuit or station within one Conference year. He very properly decided that if the fourth Quarterly Conference adjourns *sine die* no other Conference can be legally called for that year. As some of the Quarterly Conferences must be held two or three months before the Annual Conference, it has long since been decided that where important business which ought to be transacted before the Annual Conference is not ready for the action of the fourth Quarterly Conference at the time of its meeting, instead of adjourning *sine die* it may adjourn over to a specified day or to meet at the call of the presiding elder—not as a fifth Quarterly Conference, but as the adjourned fourth, to finish its business. If a Quarterly Conference that cannot possibly get through its legal business on Saturday night may adjourn until Monday, there can be nothing illegal in adjourning to any time prior to the Annual Conference.

Except the interchange of a few thoughts about the Elizabeth Female Academy, the subject of educational institutions was not discussed at this Conference, so far as anything appears on the journal.

It was well known that John Newland Maffitt would not do any regular pastoral work long at a

time. He was now a member of this Conference, though absent during the session. Quite a number of the preachers, who were not much acquainted with him, had expressed a determination to effect his location in his absence without his having requested it; but those who knew him intimately were anxious to postpone the matter until he should be present and have the opportunity to express his own views on the subject. He had already passed the examination of his character, and the Conference had requested his continuance in the agency of the New Orleans Church. Bishop Andrew consented to a night session in his absence, with William Winans in the chair. The friends of Mr. Maffitt had a private interview and determined on what they considered a little innocent strategy. They would make a motion at the start to suspend the fifteen-minute rule and give the speakers full latitude as to time. All seemed willing to the suspension of the rule, and David O. Shattuck made the opening speech against the location of Mr. Maffitt. He spoke at least one hour. He was well acquainted with Mr. Maffitt, and gave his history in detail from the time he entered the ministry, showing that he had always been the true friend of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, as one of her accredited ministers, had been abundant in labors and success. One or two others followed Judge Shattuck at full length on the same side; and when it became known that B. M. Drake, John G. Jones, and several others intended to claim the floor in favor of retaining Mr. Maffitt in the Conference until he should be located at his own request, the opposition suddenly gave up the wearisome con-

test and consented to leave him without a pastoral charge at his own request.

Why was it that there was any opposition to Mr. Maffitt among the members and ministers of our own Church? That such a preacher should meet with opposition outside of his own Church, or outside of any Church, is not surprising. Who in his own Church that knew him well could see any blameworthy fault in him? His persecution from within must have been the outgrowth of ignorance or prejudice or a mere morbid jealousy for the honor of the Church and ministry. Mr. Maffitt was not only a man of extraordinary eloquence and power in the pulpit, but a humble, sincere, and earnest Christian. No man not a devout follower of Christ could spend so much time in private meditation and earnest prayer as he, especially during his revival seasons. He made his home with the best families in the Church, and this is their uniform testimony. He was an educated Irishman, and possessed all the exuberant and confiding impulsiveness of his nation, which sometimes had the appearance of childish imprudence; but even what were esteemed by the hypercritical as faults were of the most innocent and harmless character.

After voting to hold the next annual session at Grenada, in the New Purchase (the Bishop giving the time as December 5, 1838), on the eighth day of the present sitting, and after receiving our appointments, the Conference adjourned.

William Winans succeeded Barnabas Pipkin on the New Orleans District, which had to be reduced in size on account of his increasing feebleness. Jef-

ferson Hamilton was stationed in New Orleans and Enoch N. Talley on Lafayette Mission; Samuel L. Scott in Baton Rouge and Robert S. Collins in Woodville; William Langarl and William H. Watkins on Wilkinson Circuit. Thomas Clinton was continued on Wilkinson Colored Mission. The beloved and faithful Mrs. Pipkin, who had hitherto shared the burdens of the itinerancy with her husband, had fallen into severe and protracted bodily affliction, which had led Mr. Pipkin to the determination to request the Conference to leave him without an appointment the present year; but, after some deliberation on the subject, it was thought best to relieve Mr. Winans by detaching three circuits from the New Orleans District and forming a small district, called Greensburg, and appoint Mr. Pipkin in charge. His preachers were Joseph P. Snead, Mathew Ramsey, and David M. Wiggins.

Benjamin M. Drake was continued on the Natchez District, without much change in its structure except that an additional pastoral charge was organized from the northern end of Concordia Circuit and called New Carthage, and the name of Concordia was changed to Vidalia, the name of the parish town opposite Natchez. Elias R. Porter was stationed in Natchez and Elijah Steele on Washington Circuit. It was here he made one of his best impressions as a talented young preacher and faithful pastor. Having a small circuit, he did most of his preaching on the Sabbath, and spent much of his time in the week in pastoral visiting. His congregations increased almost to the limits of the communities in which he preached. It was said that he

would ride around early in the week, making short pastoral calls and inviting everybody to attend church next Sabbath, and then he would go around again in the latter part of the week to ascertain if they were coming to church according to his special invitation.

Robert D. Smith was continued on the Vicksburg District. The towns of Clinton and Raymond were connected with Jackson and placed in the Sharon District, and a new work was added to the Vicksburg District, called Bayou Mason Mission. Quite a number of families had settled west and south of Lake Providence, on the Bayou Mason hills, and around Swan Lake and at other points—enough to make a good circuit. Alexander S. Parker, one of our most faithful young men, was appointed to organize and labor on this mission. Laban Cheney, a transfer from the New York Conference, was stationed in Vicksburg.

The writer was continued on the Sharon District, with some slight changes in the work. Benton and Manchester were returned to Holmes Circuit, with two preachers on the work; Clinton, Raymond, and Jackson were united in one pastoral charge, under Charles K. Marshall, with Thomas Ford employed as a supply. Our Church was not strong at Raymond, and had worshiped in the courthouse. The citizens, of various denominations, and the Masons procured a lot and agreed to build a house, to be occupied as a union Church below and a lodge above. They put up the frame and the Masons soon finished their lodge, but the union Church apartment remained unfinished and untenable a long time.

"What was everybody's business was nobody's business." Major Demoss, one of the leading citizens of Raymond, said to Mr. Ford: "We are utterly tired of seeing that naked frame that supports the Masonic Lodge. By common consent we are willing to give a fee simple title to the property pertaining to the union Church to any denomination that will finish it, so that we can have a respectable and commodious place of worship." Mr. Ford took the hint. A Board of Trustees was appointed according to the Discipline, the property legally put into their hands, and in a few months was completed a commodious and well-furnished Methodist church, in which the congregation has worshiped to this date. Canton was left to be supplied by John Cotton, now in a local relation.

The circuit known as Louisville, in the Monticello District of last year, was placed in the Sharon District, and under the blessing of God soon developed into a much larger and better circuit. Little communities had been formed all over Winston and Oktibbeha Counties. Louisville, the county site of Winston, was assuming the form of a clever village, while Starkville, the county site of Oktibbeha, was already putting on the airs of a smart inland town. Rev. Jacob Mathews, late of the Alabama Conference, and his brother-in-law, Rev. John H. Stone, had lately settled in the eastern part of Winston County, and by their labors contributed largely to the up-building of Methodism in all that country. They were both talented preachers, and Mr. Mathews was a superior preacher. Hon. James Walton, then a member of the State Senate, and afterwards a very

talented member of the Mississippi Conference, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Hogan, were living at Starkville, and were prayerfully and industriously striving to advance the Church there. Lorenzo D. Langford, having been a local preacher some years, was preacher in charge of this vast circuit. At first there was some murmuring about the appointment. Mr. Langford had a family; and as they lived a considerable distance from the circuit, how was he to render the circuit full service? Then, he was a plain, uneducated man; how would he succeed among a people accustomed to hear such preachers as Jacob Mathews, John H. Stone, Benjamin B. Smith, and the old ex-member of the Conference, Elijah Gentry? Mr. Langford, "being full of faith and the Holy Ghost," went everywhere preaching the word among the new settlers. He seemed to think of nothing in comparison with the salvation of souls. The result was that he had a glorious ingathering into the Church. Everybody began to think he was the very man needed.

A very valuable transfer came from the Tennessee Conference in the person of John M. Holland. He was a native of Williamson County, Tenn., embraced religion in early life, and became almost immediately an active member of the Church. In the fall of 1822 he was admitted on trial into the Tennessee Conference, where he filled the offices of pastor, presiding elder, and college agent with great acceptability and usefulness until his transfer to the Mississippi Conference. Mr. Holland was educated, refined, and courtly. He was a successful tactician in revival meetings, and excelled in the service of

song. He was in all respects a most lovely man and minister. At the late Conference he was appointed presiding elder of the Holly Springs District. The work was still enlarging and assuming a higher importance in the Chickasaw Purchase. The rich lands had invited a superior class of families to settle in the Purchase, and their elevated grade in society required a fair proportion of the best talents in the Conference to be stationed among them. Joseph Travis was stationed in Holly Springs and Nathaniel R. Jarratt was appointed to organize a new circuit in the northeastern corner of the State, to be called Tishomingo. The other circuits remained as they were, with such additions as the preachers saw proper to make, but retaining the names of the previous year.

The area of the settlements had so enlarged in North Mississippi that it became necessary to organize a new district south of Holly Springs, which took the name of Grenada, with David O. Shattuck as presiding elder. The principal enlargement of the work which made this new district necessary was in the direction of Choctaw and Chickasaw Counties, around the head waters of the Big Black and Yalobusha Rivers.

Green M. Rogers was appointed presiding elder of the Monticello District, Mr Houghton not being able to stand the horseback-riding necessary to compass the district four times a year. Two new circuits were organized in this district, called Raleigh and Paulding, the former mainly in Smith and the latter in Jasper County. This new territory had been transiently passed over a few times by the itin-

erants on their long rounds, but hitherto had been mainly served by a few faithful local preachers who had emigrated into that region with the early settlers, among whom may be honorably mentioned Ransom J. Jones, Sr., and Jacob Carr.

The three missionaries in Texas had already commenced a noble work. At first they traveled over the republic, preaching wherever they could in private houses or extemporized places, and taking the names of emigrant members and local preachers, and organizing them into societies. It is said that Doctor Ruter, in the space of about two or three months after his first entrance into Texas, had taken the names of three hundred emigrant members. How many the other two missionaries collected is not recorded, but from their known activity they were not much behind their superintendent. Methodism did not have to struggle long for a full-grown existence in the republic of Texas. Much of the material for a spiritual edifice there had been well prepared in the States before its removal to Texas, and in a few years our Church appeared there in fair proportions with her church houses, camp grounds, Sabbath schools, and literary institutions. The great demand at first was for additional laborers to follow up the rapidly extending settlements. After the first general reconnoissance, Doctor Ruter decided that he needed twelve additional itinerants to supply the "fields already white unto the harvest." The statistics show a very encouraging increase in numerical strength—an increase of two thousand and ninety-six white, two thousand three hundred and eighteen colored, and eight Indian members.

CHAPTER XVII.

1838.

THE Conference met at the new and growing town of Grenada, on the Yalobusha River, in Yalobusha County, December 5, 1838. This was the first Conference ever held in North Mississippi. Bishop Morris, being unavoidably detained on the way, did not arrive until Saturday evening. John M. Holland was called to conduct the opening religious services and to preside over the organization of the Conference. The Conference then balloted for a President, and William Winans was elected. Joseph Travis was again elected Secretary.

A letter was found in the post office of a private character, directed to Bishop Robert R. Roberts, which was an indication that he intended to visit the Mississippi Conference once more; but he did not come, and we saw our first and very greatly beloved Bishop no more. It adds to the attractions of heaven to believe that we shall greet him there.

The usual standing committees were appointed, and the regular routine business of an Annual Conference commenced. Under the first question nineteen were admittted on trial, a number of whom, after a few years, retired from the itinerancy and passed out of sight. A fair proportion of these probationers did long and faithful service, and some of them remain to the present day, though now on the

superannuated list, among whom we may mention Erastus R. Strickland, Levi Pearce, and Andrew Day. Eight were continued on trial; eight were received into full connection, six of whom were ordained deacons, the other two having been previously ordained; six were ordained elders; Elijah B. McKay and James Watson, formerly of our Conference, and Isaac C. Foster and Samuel R. Davidson, formerly of the Tennessee Conference, were readmitted; Littleton Fowler, Jesse Hoard, Isaac L. G. Strickland, and Samuel A. Williams, of the Tennessee Conference, and Abel Stevens, of the New England Conference, and Sewell Campbell, from the Kentucky Conference, in virtue of their appointment as missionaries to Texas, became members of the Mississippi Conference; Jefferson Hamilton and James McLeod were transferred to the Alabama Conference; William Pearson, Philip Dieffenweirth, Charles J. Carney, and John N. Maffitt were located at their own request, and Anthony H. Holcomb and James McDonald were located by a vote of the Conference as being unsuitable for the work of traveling preachers. This measure afflicted Mr. Holcomb very much, for he placed a high estimate upon his membership in the Conference; but he had so many unministerial ways, of which it seemed impossible to make him conscious, that no presiding elder or circuit that had him one year was willing to take him a second. After years of trial and disappointment, he was advised to locate; and it is due to his memory to say that when, through the faithfulness of a friend, he became apprised of his standing in the Bishop's Council, he came before the Conference

and asked to be located, though it was evident that he did it as a matter of necessity. He labored a few years as a local preacher and then entered into rest.

William McD. Martin, James A. James, and Mathew Ramsey were discontinued at their own request. Richard Angell (who, it seems, declined taking his transfer last year to the Alabama Conference), Jesse Lee, William V. Douglass, Thomas Owens, James Applewhite, and Hardy Mullins were declared superannuated. Fourteen local preachers, several of whom had now entered the itinerancy, were elected to deacon's orders, and eight were elected to the order of elder.

Bishop Morris preached us an admirable sermon on the Sabbath from Daniel xii. 4: "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." After a lucid explanation of the text in its primary and full meaning as applicable to all divinely called and active preachers of the gospel, he showed its peculiar applicability to our itinerant preachers, who are constantly running to and fro all over the land, preaching the doctrines of a pure Christianity, so that Bible knowledge is increased and errors in doctrine are continually subsiding and disappearing. His description of the rapid spread and prevalence of pure Arminianism and the overthrow of its antagonistic doctrines through the instrumentality of the itinerancy was truly encouraging to the preachers to go on in their divinely appointed work.

The Conference was permitted to draw on the Book Concern for four hundred dollars and on the Chartered Fund for eighty-two dollars. The Foster

bequest yielded one hundred and fifty dollars, being only half of the interest due for the current year. The Planters' Bank was showing to every practiced eye unmistakable signs of a coming collapse. After adding all available Conference funds together, such was the financial convulsion of the country that many of the toiling itinerants were quite deficient in their small salaries. As soon as the good and liberal-hearted people of Grenada found this out from the report of the stewards, they commenced soliciting donations, both in public and in private, and persevered until a sufficient amount was raised to bring every deficient salary up to the full disciplinary allowance. Judge Shattuck, the presiding elder of the district, was very influential in this movement. At a meeting of the Preachers' Fund Society its object was explained to the congregation, and a far larger sum was contributed to its capital stock than was ever contributed at any other place. Up to that date we had met with no such liberality elsewhere. It was with regret that we had to deliver that fair and liberal town over to the Memphis Conference.

An item in the journal recalls an interesting case in the person of Isaac Taylor. When he was converted he was wholly without literary acquirements, unless it may have been a mere knowledge of the alphabet. He soon began to pray in public and exhort, and professed to feel called of God to preach the gospel. His wife taught him to read, and he soon became quite a successful student. At this Conference, after his two years' probation, he came forward for admission into full connection and elec-

tion to deacon's orders. The Conference hesitated. He had not stood a thorough examination on the course of study, and then there was a roughness in his manners at times that was objectionable. After the first call and representation of his case, the following entry was made in the journal—viz., "Isaac Taylor was not admitted, for not giving satisfaction as to the course of study, but was continued on trial, and Conference resolved he be kindly admonished by the Chair to be more mild and smooth in his intercourse with society as a preacher." The required admonition was faithfully given by President Wilians and kindly and profitably received by Mr. Taylor—so much so that in a few days his case was reconsidered and he was received into full connection and elected to deacon's orders. Mr. Taylor had a robust constitution and a mind capable of very rapid development; but after continuing in the Conference four years, he located and turned his attention to the study and practice of law, and after a few years went to Texas. If Mr. Taylor had continued to devote his whole attention to the study of theology and the practical duties of the itinerancy, what eminence he might have attained in the ministry! It is to be regretted that, after the Church takes up some young men from the very back door of ignorance and obscurity and teaches them how to study successfully, and starts them on the highroad to usefulness, if not to fame, they take advantage of the position given them and turn their attention to the study of some secular profession, rendering the remainder of their lives almost useless as ministers of the gospel.

As the book trade in the Mississippi Conference

was now to a great extent supplied from the Book Concern at Cincinnati, we received annual visits from one of its agents. At this session that amiable, sweet-spirited man, Rev. John F. Wright, presented an exhibit of the Western Book Concern, and spoke in glowing terms of its growing prosperity. He also told of the extraordinary conversion of William Nast, an educated German, who had entered the ministry and was laboring successfully among the German population in Cincinnati and elsewhere, and had commenced the publication of a Methodist paper in German, called the *Christian Apologist*. The Conference approved of this publication and pledged to give it circulation among any German population in its bounds.

Ministers of the gospel "are men of like passions with others," and are surrounded with the common infirmities of humanity. It is not to be expected, then, that they should be infallible and always get on smoothly. Even where they are innocent of any intentional wrong, it is sometimes necessary to have a judicial investigation in order to establish their innocence, or to give the accused an opportunity to confess their indiscretions and promise amendment.

Nathaniel R. Jarratt had been suspended a week before Conference met by a committee called together by John M. Holland, presiding elder of the Holly Springs District, the committee consisting of Joseph Travis, John W. Ellis, and Robert S. Collins. The first charge was "falsehood." The specification was, "in concealing the truth, thereby making false impressions." The second charge was "attempting to defraud." The specification in support of this

charge was, "in proposing to rescind a contract with H. Ferrill relative to a tract of land to which he had given his obligation to make said Ferrill a title whenever he should obtain a title himself." As this matter had arisen in the extreme northern part of the Conference, the ministers from that region shaped the circumstances of its introduction to the Conference; and the long discussion which followed was conducted mostly by the North Mississippians. When Mr. Jarratt was permitted to speak in his own behalf, in a subdued tone of voice and manner, with evidences of true humility, he affirmed that his motives were pure but his plan of proceeding was wrong, for which error he asked the forgiveness of his brethren. The Conference, by vote, disapproved of his indiscretions, requested the Bishop to give him a suitable admonition before the Conference for the benefit of himself and all present, and then passed his character. Mr. Jarratt received the admonition with meekness and conducted himself as a true Christian, and in the end had more the sympathy than the censure of his brethren.

Bradford Frazee was still in charge of the Elizabeth Female Academy. It would seem from the journal that the committee appointed at the last Conference to investigate complaints against him at Washington either had not acted at all or had acted in a way not satisfactory to Mr. Frazee. In a letter to David O. Shattuck he asked his advice and assistance in his case. Mr. Shattuck petitioned the Conference to have a new committee appointed to investigate the case. The Conference consented to the proposal, and requested Bishop Morris to appoint

the committee. He appointed on the committee William Winans, Thomas Clinton, Laban C. Cheney, Robert D. Smith, John Lane, and Samuel W. Spear. Mr. Frazee's character passed for the present, and he was appointed as the colleague of Daniel Leggatt, on Vidalia Circuit.

The Conference was taking an increasing interest in Sabbath schools. The number and other statistics of Sabbath schools were called for and reported in detail.

The first centennial year of Methodism was now approaching, and it was resolved to celebrate it in a becoming and useful manner. The time for the celebration was fixed in the fall of 1839, and every presiding elder was expected to call a district convention in time to appoint the place, select the speakers and give them their subjects, and make all necessary arrangements to celebrate the centennial year with appropriate religious services. This was very generally attended to in our Conference. In the country places it was generally connected with the fall camp meetings, and was the means of spreading, through public addresses, a vast amount of information relative to the past history, present status, and future prospects of this branch of the general Church, with all missionary, Sabbath school, educational, and other Church interests. The speakers selected were required to write out their discourses in full and read them. This requirement made it necessary for each speaker to investigate and elaborate the subject assigned him, which, in many cases, was the means of improving his knowledge of Methodism as much as he improved the

knowledge of his hearers. The centennial celebration passed off well.

A number of the leading members and patrons of this Church in Holmes and Carroll Counties became interested in establishing a seminary of learning of high academic grade at a place they named Emory, in honor of the late Bishop Emory. The place they selected was on the dividing ridge between the rich valley lands of Yazoo and Big Black Rivers, and abounded with pure water, with every indication of a good, healthy location. One leading idea of the proprietors was to induce the owners of large plantations in the bottom lands of the adjacent rivers to fix their family residences at Emory for health, educational, and Church purposes. The scheme was plausible and bade fair to prosper until the great financial crash which spread embarrassment all over our country stopped its further progress. Good schools were taught there a number of years, and the place was assuming the appearance of a lively village when its progress was checked by the stress of the times. The proprietors were anxious to place the schools under the patronage of the Conference, and requested the writer to represent them in the matter, which he did; whereupon the Conference appointed David O. Shattuck, John G. Jones, and Washington Ford a committee to confer with the trustees and report to the next Conference.

Papers were also received from Texas, setting forth the great importance of establishing at an early day a denominational seminary of learning in the republic. These papers were referred to the Superintendent of the Texas Mission, with instructions

to look into the subject and report to the next Conference. This was the beginning of the extensive and varied denominational seminaries in Texas.

To give and perpetuate the settled convictions of our fathers on the subject of Church fairs, pews, instrumental music, and choirs, we transcribe a few *verbatim* resolutions from the journal of this Conference:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that those exhibitions generally called fairs are pernicious in their influence on the Church, and therefore should be discouraged by all our preachers.

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church requires, in all instances, that the seats in our churches should be free, and that for any preacher to advocate the sale or renting of pews in our houses of worship is guilty of an offense against the Church and should be reprov'd by the Conference.

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that the introduction of instrumental music into public worship in our churches and the conducting of the music in our churches by choirs, in the common sense of the term, is injurious to the spirituality of singing, and is inconsistent with the directions of our Discipline.

Resolved, That the above resolutions in reference to fairs, pews, instrumental music, and choirs be published in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.

The Conference set apart the first Friday in the following October as a day of fasting and prayer for the general prosperity of the Church, and especially that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more laborers into his harvest. The next Conference was appointed to be at Natchez December 4, 1839. The committees of examination on the course

of study were announced. Votes of thanks to the citizens generally for their hospitality and liberality, and to individuals for special favors, were passed, and after a session of nine days we adjourned to meet at the church at candlelight to receive the appointments. We had enjoyed a happy Conference. Some of our meetings in the church were full of holy joy and rapturous praise. Now we were to be scattered again. Some of the veterans in the itinerancy from the southern part of the Conference had to take a horseback ride of two or three hundred miles to reach their homes and pastoral charges. This reminded them of the days when they used to travel in the depth of winter to and from the Conferences in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

The Greensburg District was now called Baton Rouge, and was so enlarged as to include Baton Rouge on the west, Pearl River and Pearlinton on the east, and Amite on the north. Barnabas Pipkin was continued in the presiding eldership.

The term of Benjamin M. Drake on the Natchez District having expired by limitation, it was remodeled and reduced in size to suit the age and feebleness of Mr. Winans, and he was placed in charge of it. Elijah Steele was stationed in Woodville, B. M. Drake in Natchez, and Lewellyn Campbell and William H. Watkins in New Orleans and Lafayette Mission. Mr. Campbell had been sent from the Kentucky Conference as a missionary to Texas, and had been laboring there the preceding year and expected to return; but the Bishop lacked a suitable man for New Orleans, and after consulting with Mr. Campbell obtained his consent to go to the city.

The name of Monticello was exchanged for Brandon District, with Green M. Rogers continued as presiding elder. A new circuit was organized in the northeastern corner of this district, called Decatur, the name of the county town of Newton County. This circuit in part took the place of the original Newton Mission, established two years before. Thomas Myers was in charge this year.

John Lane succeeded Robert D. Smith on the Vicksburg District. The various pastoral charges in this district, as now constructed, were all on or near the Mississippi River, and extended from the southern limit of Jefferson as far north as Bolivar County. The Mississippi part of the circuit, called "Providence" last year, was detached and organized into Lake Washington Mission, with Joel Sanders as missionary. The new work organized last year on Bayou Mason, being in the bounds of the Arkansas Conference, was turned over to that Conference and placed in the Monroe District. Charles K. Marshall was stationed in Vicksburg, and Laban C. Cheney and Horace M. Booth at Port Gibson and Grand Gulf. John G. Jones was continued in charge of the Sharon District, which had been greatly curtailed in territory, but still had more than the original number of pastoral charges. Elias R. Porter was stationed in Jackson, the State capital, and succeeded in finishing the first and only church our denomination has ever had there, except a church for the colored people. Canton was re-annexed to Madison Circuit, with two preachers on that circuit. Holmes Circuit was divided, and the lower end was organized into Yazoo Circuit, including Benton and

Yazoo City, with J. Ira E. Byrd and Robert R. Gill as pastors. Levi Pearce was on the Madison Colored Mission, and Elijah B. McKay on that of Yazoo.

David O. Shattuck was continued in charge of the Grenada District. In this district Choctaw as the name of a circuit was dropped, and Greensboro, the name of the county site of Choctaw County, took its place. Yalobusha was in the same way substituted by Carroll. A new work was added, called Spring Hill, and left to be supplied. The name was discontinued after this year. John M. Holland was continued on the Holly Springs District, to which were added this year Cold Water Circuit and Tunica and Albertson Missions; the two former being in De Soto, Panola, Tunica, and Coahoma Counties, in the northwestern corner of the State, and the latter in Tippah County. Samuel L. L. Scott was stationed in Holly Springs, and Joseph Travis was President of Holly Springs University, a good little school with a big name. Nathaniel R. Jarratt, after all his troubles, was returned to Tishomingo Circuit, and was highly appreciated where he was best known.

Colored missions were greatly multiplied at this Conference, some of which were supplied by some of the best traveling elders, and others by some of the most talented local preachers. The work among the colored people was not all left to the missionaries, but was still kept up by the circuit pastors wherever it could be continued in connection with the regular pastoral charges.

On the 16th of May, 1838, the Texas Mission met

with a very great loss in the death of its first superintendent, Rev. Martin Ruter, D.D. He was no ordinary man. Like Samuel, his whole earthly existence was devoted to the service of God. He was born April 3, 1785, in Charlestown, Worcester County, Mass. Being religiously instructed and trained from infancy, his early boyhood was marked with morality and attention to religious duties. At the age of fourteen he obtained an assurance of his acceptance in Christ, and at the age of sixteen was admitted on trial into the New York Conference. From this time he labored extensively on circuits, in city stations, and on districts, in the Northern and Eastern States of the Union and in Canada, until 1820, when he was elected by the General Conference to superintend the Western Book Concern, at Cincinnati, Ohio, to which agency he was re-elected in 1824. Before the expiration of his second term in the book agency, he was elected President of Augusta College, in Kentucky, which position he filled over four years. He was then transferred to the Pittsburg Conference, and stationed two years in the city of Pittsburg. Near the close of his second year he was elected to preside over Alleghany College, located at Meadville, Pa., from which in the summer of 1837 he was appointed to the superintendency of the most important missionary field on the continent. Mr. Ruter had entered the ministry with nothing more than a good rudimental English education; but while doing full work as an itinerant minister he had become well versed in history, science, and the languages, and as a literary man had but few superiors. The Asbury Col-

lege, in Baltimore, without his knowledge, conferred on him the degree of Master of Arts, and in 1822 Transylvania University, of Kentucky, conferred on him the well-merited degree of D.D. Few men in this or any other age or country ever sacrificed as much of domestic comfort or secular interest to go on a foreign mission as did Dr. Ruter. As soon as he received his appointment to Texas he hastened his preparations to commence his work. He left his family at New Albany, Ind., until he could reconnoiter his mission field and make arrangements to remove them to the Republic. He descended the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Rodney, Miss., where he mounted his horse and, taking the main emigrant route, crossed the Sabine on the 21st of November, 1837. He commenced his labors immediately in daily preaching, forming societies, laying plans for building churches, promoting Sabbath schools, planning circuits, and laying the foundation for a central literary institution of high grade, which he saw would soon be much needed by both the Church and country. His rides were long, his exposures great, his eating and sleeping accommodations often very scant. He seemed to feel all the time that the Master's business required haste. He traveled at a rapid rate, generally riding in a long and continuous trot. Thus he continued until midspring of 1838, when his health began to fail. He paused long enough to take medicine, and found relief. He now thought of going for his family; but after a day's journey he was so completely exhausted that he concluded to return to Washington, Tex., where he lingered several weeks, with the best atten-

tion that good physicians and devoted friends could give him, and then died in great peace on May 16, 1838.

His colleagues, Messrs. Fowler and Alexander, continued in the field until Conference, at which the following appointments were made for the Texas Mission District:

Littleton Fowler, P. E.

Houston and Galveston, Abel Stevens.

Nacogdoches, Samuel A. Williams.

Washington, Robert Alexander, Isaac L. G.
Strickland.

Montgomery, Jesse Hoard.

Brazonia, Joseph P. Snead.

Neither Bishop Morris nor any member of his Council had ever been to Texas, and in making these appointments had to leave it discretionary with Mr. Fowler, after consulting his preachers, to remodel them in any way he thought best for the general interests of the work. As soon as convenient he assembled a majority of the missionaries in the vicinity of San Augustine, and, after prayerful consultation, made several changes in the plan of the work and in the appointments of some of the preachers, but all in reference to occupying as much territory and preaching to as many people as possible. The Texas Mission is now fairly established, is a legitimate part of the Mississippi Conference, and will have a place in its history.

Of the nineteen who were admitted on trial at this Conference, nearly half of them are dead. Absalom Petitt and Reuben B. Ricketts still survive in extreme old age; Edward Fountain, after a short

career in the itinerancy, took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church; Horace M. Booth, after many years of active labor in the Mississippi Conference, both as a traveling and local preacher, is now effective in the East Texas Conference; while Levi Pearce and Andrew Day are on the honored roll of well-worn superannuates, and Erastus R. Strickland, with patriarchal mien, is still on the effective list. Levi Pearce had been admitted on trial before, but his pecuniary circumstances led him to ask a short discontinuance. Since reëntering the Conference he has continued without a break until the present day. He is a man of commanding personal appearance and an improving intellect, and soon rose to eminence among his brethren, filling many of the most important appointments on circuits, stations, and districts, and several times was a delegate to the General Conference. After the war he became discouraged about the future prospects of our country, and removed with his family to British Honduras. Andrew Day was a deeply pious and very impulsive young Christian, with a limited education when he entered the ministry. He has labored long, faithfully, and successfully, until, debilitated by labor and advancing years, he has been retired to the superannuated list.

Erastus R. Strickland is still among us. His experience and successful labors will be suggestive and encouraging to younger men. He was born in Meredith, Delaware County, New York, on April 6, 1807. In 1828 he was converted at a camp meeting in Orleans County, New York. He immediately felt moved to labor for the salvation of others, and

became an active layman in a place where Methodism was weak and in low repute. He soon began to feel moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel, but he fled from the face of the Lord to Georgia, where, to use his own language, "the whale of this world swallowed him, but threw him up again in the Mississippi Conference in 1836." Mr. Strickland was married to a cultured, refined Christian lady, and a member of an excellent Methodist family. On coming to Mississippi he settled in Neshoba County, with very promising worldly prospects, and began to amass a fortune by entering government land in the Choctaw Purchase. He had been licensed to preach in Georgia, but on coming to Mississippi he put his "light under a bushel," and was little known as a preacher for some time. He became reawakened to a sense of what might be the consequences of his unfaithfulness both to himself and others, had his license renewed, and became industrious as a local preacher, preaching extensively in Neshoba, Leake, Winston, and other new counties. He was not satisfied in his local relation; he felt sensibly moved toward the itinerancy, but the claims of his family in connection with his widely extended business transactions seemed to place insurmountable difficulties in his way. Realizing that it was a fearful thing to disobey the call of God, he determined to forsake houses and lands, domestic comforts and prospective wealth, for the sake of preaching the gospel to dying men. He was soon after recommended for admission on trial into the Conference, and also for deacon's orders as a local preacher. His industry and success seemed to excite the

jealousy and envy of some who were less able and successful than he, and they accused him of being worldly-minded and thinking more about entering wild land than preaching the gospel. This ungenerous gossip reached members of the Conference who had no personal acquaintance with him, so that when he was proposed for admission on trial he was promptly rejected, and even a motion to permit the presiding elder to employ him was lost. This fell heavily on Mr. Strickland, who was present; but he was patient and quiet, and associated freely with the preachers for a few days, so that they might become acquainted with him, and then a reconsideration of his case was secured, and he was cordially admitted and elected to deacon's orders. For nearly forty years no one has ever regretted the admission of Erastus R. Strickland into our Conference. This year (1839) Mr. Strickland was appointed to Louisville Circuit as the colleague of Edwin Philips, a young minister of precious memory. This circuit was large and lay mostly in Winston and Oktibbeha Counties. Several hundred were added to the Church, most of whom gave evidence of being soundly converted.

The revival took hold of every gradation of society, the educated and professional classes sharing largely in the benefits of the gracious visitation. Prominent among the noted conversions at Ellison Ridge was that of Col. Murff. He was a substantial citizen and the head of a lovely family, but had hitherto lived an irreligious life. His awakening was thorough and his conversion powerful. He immediately set up his family altar, and was at-

tentive to all the duties of Church membership. The result was that he was a satisfied and happy Christian. He delighted in private communion with God, and for the enjoyment of this great privilege he selected a grove in a quiet valley to which he often retired to be alone with God. One lovely Sabbath morning he retired alone to this sacred spot, and while engaged in prayer his soul was filled to overflowing with love, peace, and joy, and he was constrained to shout aloud the praises of God. His wife heard his voice somewhat indistinctly, and sent some of the servants to inquire into the cause. The servants caught the gracious influence, and did not return. Then she and others of the family went, only to remain and help the Colonel to shout. The neighbors heard the noise, as of a multitude, and came to see what it all meant. Many of them in turn partook of the great joy, and turned the place of private prayer into a place of public worship, where they remained, singing, praying, exhorting one another, and shouting, until near sunset. It will take the revelations of eternity to disclose the accumulating good fruits of that unappointed meeting in Col. Murff's private grove. Col. Murff became a local preacher, and still lives to bless the Church with his example, his prayers, and his pulpit labors. Rev. J. D. Murff, formerly of the Mississippi but now of the North Mississippi Conference, is a son of Col. Murff.

Leroy Masengale, of the Alabama Conference, and his father-in-law, a very worthy and useful local preacher by the name of Lovelady, lived near the borders of the Louisville Circuit, and sometimes

crossed the Conference boundary and did good service at camp meetings. Mr. Lovelady was a thrifty farmer as well as an acceptable and useful local preacher. He adopted an amusing plan to capture a bear that had eluded his dogs and gun while depredating on his roasting ears. He was well apprised of the fact that bears are fond of honey. He accordingly prepared a bowl of honey, which he "laced" with a liberal supply of brandy, and then placed it inside the field where bruin usually crossed the fence in quest of his meal of new corn. The bear found the exquisite and exhilarating mixture, and lapped it up. Mr. Lovelady went down early in the morning to ascertain the result of his experiment, when he enjoyed a complete triumph in seeing bruin staggering and rolling over, utterly unable to recross the fence, and apparently as happy as a bear could be. Seeing he was both helpless and good-humored, Mr. Lovelady approached with a morning salutation, shook his paw, asked after his welfare, and then killed and dressed him.

In 1840-41 Mr. Strickland was in charge of Paulding Circuit, with Henry J. Harris as his junior the first year. During the two years about five hundred were added to the Church, embracing many of the best educated and most influential men and women of the country. It was during Mr. Strickland's two years' labor on this circuit that Hon. Henry Mounger and Hon. John Watts, both eminent jurists, and afterwards talented and useful local preachers, were brought into Church fellowship. They were not, however, awakened directly through the instrumentality of Mr. Strickland, but

in a way to show what honor God often puts upon faithful Christian women. The two jurists were on their way to hold circuit court at Leakeville, in Green County, Mr. Mounger as judge and Mr. Watts as district attorney, when they called to spend the night with Mrs. Dupree, a widow. On sitting down to supper she politely asked them to say grace. They both declined, with evident feelings of self-reproach. After supper Mrs. Dupree called her family together and led their usual evening devotions with fervent and impressive propriety. Her guests retired to bed with unprecedented feelings. How superior, and yet how beautifully modest, was the moral courage of their widowed hostess, when contrasted with theirs! There was an infinite importance in that religion which she so beautifully exemplified. They were guilty of having neglected its claims. Their personal salvation and the salvation of their families required that they should lead new lives. On their journey they mutually acknowledged their determination to devote the remainder of their days to the service of God. Soon after their return from court they united with the Church, were happily converted, and were both licensed to preach. Their legal lore and their high professional positions were made subservient to the interests of the Church. They were not only exemplary Christians and very acceptable and useful as local preachers, but they were the patrons and successful promoters of our literary institutions, and have left the Church a rich inheritance in the intelligence and piety of their children. Judge Mounger first went to his reward in heaven, leaving a son, Rev. Edwin H. Moun-

ger, a graduate of Centenary College, to serve the Church as an itinerant minister. Judge Watts from childhood had lived in Mississippi, and from the time he was eligible began to fill important offices of honor and trust. He had been district attorney, legislator, and for twenty years he filled the office of circuit judge. He was a man of commanding personal appearance, and a universal favorite at home and abroad. His parchments show that he was ordained deacon by Bishop Andrew and elder by Bishop Pierce. Judge Watts was no sinecure in his Church relations, but in the domestic circle, the Sabbath school, the social meetings of the Church, protracted and revival meetings, and District and Annual Conferences he was always prompt, earnest, and active. His exhortations and prayers came warm from his heart, and were full of sympathy, love, and faith. In his last illness he rested securely on the merits of his all-sufficient and long-tried Saviour, and calmly waited his summons to go to his heavenly home. He was buried in Garlandville by the Masonic fraternity, of which he had long been an honored member.

Mr. Strickland excelled in having new churches built at central points wherever they were needed, sometimes as many as six or eight in a year. When asked what prompted him to devote so much time, labor, and money to building churches, his reply was: "If you want the martins to come about your premises to drive away the hawks, you must hang up gourds for them to make their nests in and hatch their young; so if you want people to attend church

and become members, you must have churches built of commodious size in central localities.”

The statistics for this year give the net increase as follows—viz.: One thousand and seventy whites, four hundred and thirty-seven colored, and sixteen Indians; one hundred and ninety-five local preachers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1839.

THE Mississippi Annual Conference assembled at Natchez at 9 A.M. December 4, 1839. Bishop Andrew opened the Conference with the usual religious services. Joseph Travis was again elected secretary. After fixing the hours of meeting and adjournment, the first motion made and carried was to admit as spectators "all local preachers and probationers and any private member of the Church who may be invited by a member of the Conference to a seat in the Conference room, but none else." This was another step toward sitting with open doors; but still all outsiders and ministers and members of other Churches were not yet permitted to witness the doings of an Annual Conference. One reason of this prohibition was that the only available Conference rooms in those days were small, and would not admit a promiscuous crowd; but the main reason assigned was that the preachers, in the examination of ministerial character, would deal more faithfully with each other than they would in the presence of a mixed and fault-finding assembly. All such restraints have long since been thrown off. Periodical literature had so increased as to require a separate committee to look after its interests, which was appointed for the first time at this Conference.

Two of our beloved fellow-laborers, William V Douglass and Isaac L. G. Strickland, had ceased from their labors and gone to their eternal reward. William V Douglass was a Scotchman, born in the North of England, and was liberally educated. He was admitted into the Tennessee Conference, at Knoxville, late in 1824, and appointed to the Nashville Circuit as the junior of Elijah Kirkman. At the end of his first year he was transferred to the Mississippi Conference, and after filling seven appointments on our most important circuits and stations, including New Orleans, his health failed, and after a decline of several years he died in holy triumph. Isaac L. G. Strickland was admitted into the Tennessee Conference, held at Pulaski, Tenn., in November, 1833. After traveling four years in that Conference he was transferred to the Texas Mission, where he labored with zeal and acceptability a few months on two of the largest circuits in the republic. He fell a victim to congestive fever at the house of Mrs. Bell, in Columbia. His soul was full of victorious faith and all-conquering love, and with his expiring breath he said: "I shall soon be in heaven! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He died in the thirtieth year of his age and the sixth of his ministry. Young Strickland was our second missionary who fell at his post on Texas soil battling for the establishment of Methodism in the new republic.

The usual standing committees were appointed, with an additional one on education, consisting of Bradford Frazee, Robert Alexander, Charles K. Marshall, Littleton Fowler, and John Lane. The educa-

tional interests had so increased that this committee became a necessity, and has had its annual successors ever since.

A day of fasting and prayer, to be observed throughout the Conference, for a general advance of the cause of God, and especially that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more laborers into the harvest, had been appointed at the previous Conference, and was observed with the best results. Nineteen were admitted on trial at this Conference, of whom there remain at the present time Henry J. Harris, Daniel A. J. Parker, and Joshua T. Heard. Several of them were well advanced in life when they were admitted, and their itinerant career was short. Our Texas Mission had already become self-producing, for of those admitted Robert Crawford, Daniel Carle, Robert H. Hill, John Haynie, and Henderson D. Palmer were from the Texas Mission District. Twenty were continued on trial from last year; seven were received into full connection; six were ordained deacons and five to the office of elder. Samuel W. Hankins, of the Georgia Conference, Malcolm McPherson, of the South Carolina Conference, Wilson L. McAlister, of the Tennessee Conference, Francis Wilson, of the Ohio Conference, and Peter James, Philip Dieffenworth, and Preston Cooper, formerly of our Conference, presented their certificates of location and were readmitted. We received by transfer for the work in Texas Thomas O. Summers, from the Baltimore Conference, and Chauncy Richardson and Johnson Lewis, from the Tennessee Conference; and transferred Laban C. Cheney back to the New York

Conference. Richard A. Stewart was voted a supernumerary relation, and Richard Angell, John I. E. Byrd, Jesse Lee, Thomas Owens, Hardy Mullens, and John G. Jones superannuated; James G. Carstarphen, Andrew J. S. Harris, Isaac C. Foster, David O. Shattuck, Robert S. Collins, N. R. Jarratt, Jesse Ginn, William Craig, James Applewhite, and John D. Neal located at their own request. From the local ranks ten were elected to deacon's and one to elder's orders. During the first half of the session Bishop Andrew adhered strictly to the original practice of closing each daily session with prayer, but toward the close the apostolic benediction was substituted as the closing ceremony. Verily, the benediction is a great convenience to men who allow themselves to be too much hurried to kneel and pray together!

As much of the currency of the country at this time was greatly under par, and as the publishing interests at New York and Cincinnati were the property of the whole Church, an order was passed that all debts due for books and periodicals should be paid in good currency.

As all the Centenary addresses and sermons were required to be written and fair copies preserved, some one, who perhaps wanted to see himself in print, obtained the passage of a resolution appointing a committee of three (to be elected by ballot) to receive all the manuscripts and select a sufficient number for a convenient volume to be sold for the benefit of the Preachers' Fund Society. The selection was made and sent to Cincinnati for publication; but, fortunately for all concerned, the publi-

cation was not made, and in a few years the manuscripts had been covered so deep under a pile of rubbish that the authors could not recover them, this writer being one of them.

The Conference received from the Book Concern five hundred dollars, and from the Chartered Fund seventy-six dollars and forty-four cents, which, added to other resources, enabled the Conference stewards to bring up the deficient salaries of the preachers, leaving a small surplus to be divided among the most needy.

The Church generally was becoming more and more interested every year in the subject of denominational schools and general education. The Conference had already determined to erect and endow a college as a centennial monument, and at the late Centennial celebrations had obtained subscriptions to the amount of \$46,672.50, only \$731 of which had been collected, which discouraged the idea of a location of the contemplated college for the present. The members of Conference, however, were urged to increase the subscriptions and collections as fast as possible. A committee was appointed to receive proposals for a location, and to appoint a Board of Trustees, consisting of thirteen in number, eight traveling preachers and five laymen. John Lane was appointed treasurer until a Board of Trustees should be appointed and a treasurer duly elected. The committee on location were instructed to negotiate for the purchase of the Mississippi Springs property, in Hinds County, for the location of the college, but declined the purchase.

This Centenary College enterprise came up annually for years.

The good and popular school at Holly Springs, over which Joseph Travis presided, called "Holly Springs University," prayed to be taken under the patronage of the Conference, which prayer was granted and a resolution passed requesting an agent to be appointed to collect funds for its endowment, and a visiting committee to attend its commencement exercises.

Steps were taken to perfect and carry out the plans of the lamented Dr. Ruter in relation to the establishment of a college and female seminary at Rutersville, Tex. Robert Alexander and Chauncy Richardson were appointed to procure deeds to real estate and look after the interests of the contemplated seminaries.

The Conference, by request of the several Boards of Trustees, took under its patronage female academies at Woodville, Vicksburg, and Emory in Holmes County, and they all contributed largely to general education during their existence under the patronage of the Conference.

For the first time the Conference adopted measures to have an abstract from its journal published in pamphlet form, and it has generally been done since.

The Bishop, being requested to do so by the Conference, appointed Benjamin M. Drake, Thomas Clinton, James C. Finley, William Langarl, and Charles K. Marshall a committee to prepare a "Pastoral Address" to all the Churches under our care.

Bradford Frazee was finally "acquitted of all charges," and his character passed.

At this Conference, for the first time in the examination of elders, where there was nothing against them they were excused from retiring that their collaborators might tell in their absence what their plans of usefulness had been, and how faithfully and successfully they had labored during the preceding year.

Samuel M. Kingston was a man of zeal and good preaching abilities, but he was thoughtless and impulsive at times. He was complained of by some of his collaborators in North Mississippi, and a resolution passed requesting the Bishop to admonish him in the presence of the Conference. This was done very affectionately and tenderly by Bishop Andrew, whereupon Mr. Kingston expressed sincere regret for his inadvertencies and promised amendment.

The writer met with the sorest trial of his life at this Conference. We have already adverted to the almost utter prostration of our physical strength at the conclusion of our four years on the Sharon District. Many of our friends thought we were destined to an early grave, and we asked the Conference to allow us 'a few months' rest. Bishop Andrew informed us that our brethren had thought it best to declare us superannuated and give us at least one year of rest. We continued to preach an average of once a week until the spring was fairly opened, when we were so much improved in strength as to be able to take Dr. Drake's place in Natchez while he was in attendance on the General Conference at Baltimore. We were in Natchez during the

great tornado of May 7, 1840, when more than three hundred people were either killed outright or drowned by the upsetting of steamboats within less than a mile of where we were.

This was the time for electing our delegates to the General Conference, to meet in Baltimore May 1, 1840. William Winans, Benjamin M. Drake, and John M. Holland were elected, and John Lane, Littleton Fowler, and Green M. Rogers were elected alternates.

The New York Conference again sent us some resolutions on the subject of temperance, involving some changes in our General Rule, which were not concurred in. The Conference decidedly opposed any change in our General Rules.

The next Conference was appointed to meet at Vicksburg, and, after a busy session of ten days, closed at 7 P.M., with the Bishop's address and the announcement of the appointments.

William Winans was continued on the Natchez District, Benjamin M. Drake in Natchez, and Elijah Steele in Woodville. William H. Watkins was stationed in New Orleans, and Sewell Campbell on Lafayette Mission. The Colored Mission in New Orleans was left to be supplied, as were many other colored missions, the owners of the colored people often preferring the services of local preachers who were settled among them. Robert D. Smith was appointed President of the Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss. Barnabas Pipkin was reappointed to the Baton Rouge District.

Several circuits east of Pearl River were united in a district, which took the name of Paulding, with

Enoch N. Talley as presiding elder. A new mission appears in this district lying mostly in Perry and Jones Counties, with Daniel Jones as missionary.

Rankin gave place to the name of Brandon Circuit, which was now replaced on the Sharon District, with Robert W Kennon in charge. Green M. Rogers was presiding elder of the Sharon District; Bradford Frazee was stationed at Raymond and Clinton, and Samuel W. Spear at Jackson. Madison Colored Mission was served by Levi Pearce, and that of Holmes County by William H. B. Lane.

Louisville Circuit was taken from the Sharon District and attached to the Grenada District, and Peter James succeeded David O. Shattuck as presiding elder. William G. Gould was stationed in Grenada. The Spring Hill Circuit of last year was merged into Carroll and Greensboro Circuits.

Malcolm McPherson succeeded John M. Holland on the Holly Springs District, and Mr. Holland was appointed agent for Holly Springs University. Joseph Travis, who was continued President of the University, was also stationed in Holly Springs. The name of Albertson Mission was dropped in this district, and a mission was established called Itta-wamba; and Tunita Mission was substituted by Commerce, and elevated to a self-supporting circuit.

The work in the Chickasaw Purchase was doing well, and Methodism was becoming a power in the land. A former district was reorganized on both sides of the Mississippi River, with Lake Providence as the center, and called Providence District, with Benjamin A. Houghton as presiding elder. The

number of pastoral charges was only five, but the territory was immense and very difficult to travel on account of the annual inundations of the Mississippi bottom. Here some of our best young men received their early training in the itinerancy. A large part of ministerial labor in this district was given to the negroes on the large plantations. The preachers were generally better paid than anywhere else in the Conference.

The Vicksburg District was now confined entirely to the upland region east of the Mississippi River. John Lane was continued presiding elder, Charles K. Marshall was reappointed to Vicksburg, and A. W. Chapman was appointed to the presidency of the Vicksburg Female Academy. Philip Dieffenworth was stationed in Port Gibson and Grand Gulf. Preston Cooper was in charge of Crystal Springs, having been readmitted with greatly improved health. It was during this interval of ill health that he discovered on his premises, in Hinds County, the far-famed Cooper's Well. It is said that he obtained a knowledge of this mineral well in a dream. In the summer of 1839 a consuming drought was prevailing in the country, and Mr. Cooper had to haul his water a long distance. His crop was becoming exhausted, and he was making it a subject of daily prayer that God would send them relief in his own good time and way. While he was engaged in digging a well, at a depth of sixty feet he struck a table rock of unknown thickness. He became discouraged and discharged his hands. While in this state of disappointment he dreamed that the rock in the well was only a thin plate, and that

just under it there was abundance of water. When he awoke, he was encouraged to believe that it was from the Lord in answer to his many prayers for a providential supply of water. He recalled his hands and renewed his work. The plate of rock was soon broken, and the water gushed up in great abundance. A chemical analysis resulted in a discovery of the best mineral water in the South. It has been for many years a place of great resort for invalids.

The Texas Mission was already assuming vast proportions and becoming self-supporting, with fifteen pastoral charges and sixteen traveling preachers. The republic was now divided into two large districts, in charge of which were placed Littleton Fowler and Robert Alexander: Mr. Fowler on the San Augustine District, with Samuel A. Williams, Daniel Carle, Francis Wilson, H. D. Palmer, Moses Spear, Robert Crawford, Edward Fontaine, and a supply on Harrison Circuit; and Robert Alexander on Rutersville District, with Chauncy Richardson, John Haynie, Robert H. Hill, Abel Stevens, Thomas O. Summers, Jesse Hoard, Johnson Lewis, Joseph P. Snead, and a supply on Victoria Circuit. A goodly number of local preachers, at an early date, had emigrated to the country, among whom were Henry Stephenson, James P. Stephenson, William C. Crawford, Dr. Job M. Baker, John English, E. S. Martin, John W. Kinney, Dr. William P. Smith, A. P. Manley, and Needham J. Alford. Numbers also had been lately licensed to preach by the newly organized Quarterly Conferences. These local preachers distributed over the republic, with their Methodist families, contributed largely to the intro-

duction and establishment of the Church in the Lone Star Republic. The Mississippi Conference has sent itinerants enough to Texas to make a respectable Annual Conference.

We thank God, who has enabled us to do so, and rejoice at the increasing prosperity of our former protégé. How cheering to the Christian's heart to see that beautiful land covered with an intelligent and thrifty Protestant population, with their halls of justice, churches, and seminaries of learning, instead of the unproductive, ignorant, savage, and bigoted races that once roamed over its fair face! It is no longer a part of the Mississippi Conference. On the 4th of May, 1840, "Benjamin M. Drake presented a petition to the General Conference praying for a division of the Mississippi Conference and the formation of a new Conference in the Republic of Texas, which was referred to the Committee on Boundaries." On the 26th of May the committee reported as follows, which report was adopted: "Texas Conference shall include the Republic of Texas, except what is embraced in the Red River District of the Arkansas Conference."

On Christmas day of this year, in Ruttersville, Bishop Beverly Waugh met and organized the Texas Conference, consisting of nine members and ten probationers. The Bishop on this journey spent some time in New Orleans, inquiring particularly into the condition and prospects of our Church in the city. He decided that an Annual Conference must be held there, with a bishop and the usual celebrities in the way of book agents, editors of periodical literature, missionary secre-

tary, presidents of literary institutions, and sixty or eighty itinerants warm from their recent battlefields. The Conference sittings and daily and nightly preaching for eight or ten days would show the citizens that the Methodists not only had a real existence in their midst, but were a live people intent on success. Bishop Waugh's advice was adopted, and as soon as possible the Annual Conference was held.

The General Conference of 1840 also set off another splendid portion of territory from the Mississippi Conference. It had become desirable to form a new Conference, to be known as the Memphis Conference, and to be composed mainly of West Tennessee and North Mississippi. This new Conference took all that part of the State north of a "line running due east from the Mississippi River to the southwest corner of Tallahatchie County, thence due east to the southeastern corner of Yalobusha County, thence in a straight line to the northwestern corner of Oktibbeha County, and thence due east to the Tombigbee River." This took a very productive part of the Conference, with fifteen preachers, most of whom remained in the Memphis Conference.

The people in Western Louisiana were not well pleased with their severance from the Mississippi Conference four years ago, and the territory was returned to us by the General Conference of this year, with the Sabine as the western boundary. The retrocession of Western Louisiana brought back some preachers with a few others from the Arkansas Conference, but not a moiety of the number that

had been set off with the Texas and Memphis Conferences.

Of the early history of Rev. Hill Jones but little is known. He was by birth a North Carolinian. He embraced religion in his youth; and feeling it his duty to preach the gospel, he was admitted into the itinerancy in 1797, and traveled Caswell Circuit, in the northern part of North Carolina, under the presiding eldership of James Rogers. In 1798 he traveled Williamsburg Circuit, in Southeastern Virginia, with William McKendree as his presiding elder. At the end of two years, finding his constitution not sufficiently strong to stand the labors of the large circuits of those days, he retired from the itinerancy, and was content to labor as a local preacher the remainder of a long life. He married and engaged in agricultural pursuits. He settled in the northeastern part of Madison County, Miss., about 1830. He and his excellent wife had grown to maturity in Christian experience. It was both pleasant and instructive to hear them narrate their original conversion and their long and varied Christian experience. Their children were orderly, intelligent, and pious, and their hospitable home was one of the most agreeable resting places for the early itinerants in Madison County. Hill Jones and his saintly wife and pious children were pillars in the Church in their day. Two of his daughters and some of his grandchildren are yet living, and all are devoted members of the Church of their fathers.

Rev. John McCaully and his wife, Martha Hamilton, were born and brought up in Tyrone County, Ireland. Mr. McCaully was born in 1780, and Miss

Hamilton was born in 1782. They both embraced religion and united with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in their youth. Miss Hamilton was converted under the labors of the celebrated Gideon Ousley. Mr. McCauly soon became an active and promising young local preacher, and it suited the religious views and feelings of Miss Hamilton to accept his offered hand in marriage. This she did, however, at a sacrifice of her social and pecuniary position in society. By the usages of the country she belonged to the aristocracy, and by her marriage with a plebeian she forfeited her title to her landed estate. This seemed to suggest to the young couple the idea of coming to America, where no such arbitrary and unjust usages exist. They were married May 14, 1803, and landed in Baltimore, Md., in July, 1804. They had a tedious voyage, Mrs. McCauly being quite sick most of the time; and to add to their affliction, their first child was born, died, and was buried at sea. They at once connected themselves with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and began the active duties of life to make a support. They lived while in Maryland in Frederick County, where most of their ten children were born, and where, in 1825, they lost within a short time three of their sons by a malignant fever. In 1829 Mr. McCauly moved his family to Elkton, Todd County, Ky., where he followed his business as a dry goods merchant for two years. While here he had a very promising son, twenty years old, to die while on a visit to some relatives in Hopkinsville. Mr. McCauly then moved to Lexington, Tenn., where he merchandised some years with Mr. J. T. Hollins-

Worth, who married his only daughter, and about 1833 the whole family moved to the northeastern part of Madison County, Miss. In all their removals, from the time they left Ireland, they kept in the front ranks of Methodism. They read and studied the literature of the Church, and were well versed in our theology and Church polity. Mr. McCauly graduated to elder's orders as a local preacher, and was a very solid, clear, and energetic expounder of the Word of God. Like most of the Wesleyan preachers, he quoted liberally from the Bible in his sermons. He excelled in extemporaneous prayer, in appropriateness of expression, and in spiritual power. There were in his prayers sympathy, pathos, and power that moved all hearts, so that often a camp meeting audience was moved from center to circumference while John McCauly was praying. Most of Mr. McCauly's family, both male and female, were gifted in oral prayer. Their minds were evidently elevated by nature, as well as purified by grace. His son, Hamilton McCauly, was one of the noblest specimens of manhood, in person, mind, and character. He was six feet two inches high, stood very erect, with a noble Roman face. He was a true and talented Christian and an influential and useful citizen, and was a licensed preacher at the time of his death. He married a daughter of the venerable Hill Jones, who yet lives with their daughter, Mrs. William R. Stuart, at Ocean Springs, Miss. The whole McCauly family were Methodist Christians. The beloved old minister died in great peace at Sulphur Springs, in Madison County, Miss., April 10, 1857, aged seventy-

seven years. His saintly wife outlived all her children, having survived until 1870, when she died with Christian hope, aged eighty-eight. Father McCauly's son-in-law, J. T. Hollinsworth, still lives in New Iberia Parish, La., and has four children living by his marriage with Sarah H. McCauly. Mrs. Hamilton McCauly, at Ocean Springs, Miss., has three children living, and at last account two of Nelson McCauly's children were living, making only nine of the family yet alive.

After deducting the members set off with the Texas and Memphis Conferences and adding those received by the retrocession of Western Louisiana, the statistics show an increase this year of one thousand two hundred and seventy-five white, a decrease of eighty-nine colored, and an increase of ~~sixty~~ sixty-seven Indian members.

CHAPTER XIX.

1840.

THE Conference which closed the labors for 1840 and planned the work for 1841 met at Vicksburg December 2, 1840. Bishop Andrew being delayed, John Lane was elected President. Joseph Travis, being in North Mississippi, was set off with the Memphis Conference, but his place was well supplied by the election of Samuel W Spear. The attendance of the members of Conference was very good, but the familiar faces of the Texas and North Mississippi brethren were missed. The retrocession of Western Louisiana brought back four fellow-laborers—viz., Benjamin Jones, Henry B. Price, Cotman Methven, and the venerable William Stephenson. With the return of the territory from the Arkansas Conference came Richmond Randle, John Powell, John N. Hamill, Thomas Benn, and Spencer Watters. These were valuable accessions, especially Richmond Randle and John N. Hamill.

The usual standing committees, with some special committees, were appointed; and in a few minutes after the opening services the Conference was regularly at work. No deliberative bodies on earth, whether legislative, political, or ecclesiastical, can commence business more promptly than a Methodist Annual Conference. After an interim of twelve

months they resume their deliberations as readily and with as little confusion as though they had adjourned but yesterday. A resolution was again passed "that no person be permitted to sit with us except invited by some member of Conference." A goodly number were invited, so that the Conference room was well filled with deeply interested spectators. "The hour of adjournment having arrived, Conference closed with prayer." Yes; John Lane had been trained to this from his youth.

Bishop Andrew was present to take the chair the second morning, and opened the Conference with the usual religious ceremonies. Bishop Andrew was indeed one of us, being a native of our own sunny South, fully identified with all our Southern interests, and acquainted with all our Southern institutions.

Nine were admitted on trial at this Conference, and among them James Naconchia, a native Choctaw, recommended from Paulding Circuit, where a remnant of the tribe still remained on their reservations. He was elected to deacon's orders (having been a local preacher four years), and was appointed in charge of his own people. Reuben B. Ricketts, Thomas Myers, Josiah Box, Uriah Whatley, John C. Johnson, Absalom Pettit, E. W. Yancey, William Stanley, and Daniel Jones were discontinued at their own request. Thirteen were continued on trial; twelve were received into full connection; eleven were ordained deacons and nine elders; John B. Higginbotham, Elias R. Porter, James Gwinn, of the Tennessee Conference, and Richard Overby were readmitted; Isaac Taylor, Richard A. Stewart, Eli-

jah B. McKay, William H. B. Lane, and Samuel L. L. Scott were located at their own request. Samuel L. L. Scott was reckoned one of our most pious, eloquent, and talented young preachers. At this Conference he received an appointment which he thought disparaging to him, and he hastily arose while the Bishop was reading the appointments and asked for a location. The Bishop put his request to vote immediately, and he was located. Mr. Scott remained in the local ranks until death. He never married, nor engaged much in any secular business; but continued to preach, often with marked success, in various localities. He was well read in theology, an eloquent declaimer, and a laborious minister. As he advanced in life he bought him a little home in the vicinity of Crystal Springs. He died in poverty and peace. James Watson, John I. E. Byrd, John G. Jones, and Thomas Owens were voted a superannuated relation; six from the local ranks were elected deacons and four to elder's orders.

James L. Newman had died the previous year. His name is given in answer to the question, "Who have died this year?" but no memoir appears in the General Minutes. He was admitted into the Arkansas Conference at the time of its organization, in the fall of 1836, and traveled successively Franklin, Helena, and Greenville Circuits, in Arkansas, and in his fourth year was appointed in charge of Franklin and Newtown, in Southwestern Louisiana, where he died. He was a man of good abilities, and in every way reliable.

A committee of five, consisting of B. M. Drake, B. A. Houghton, R. D. Smith, Thomas Clinton, and

J. G. Jones, was appointed to take into consideration the best method of giving religious instruction to the colored people under our pastoral charge. The committee reported the plan of oral catechetical instruction, which was adopted, and William Winans, B. M. Drake, and J. G. Jones were appointed to prepare and publish a suitable catechism for this purpose. In a few months the catechism was prepared, and the first edition published; but before it became necessary to publish a second edition Capers's first and second catechisms for the oral instruction of the Southern colored people were published, and at once became connectional in all the Southern Conferences. They were not only used by the pastors of the colored people, but by their Sabbath school teachers and their owners on the plantations. It was becoming common for the planters to have suitable places at home for the assembling of their colored people on the Sabbaths which intervened between the visits of their missionaries to learn an additional lesson from the catechism.

The Conference was so deeply impressed with Bishop Andrew's address on Saturday to the candidates for admission into full connection that he was requested by a unanimous vote to furnish a copy for publication.

J. G. Jones was elected Assistant Secretary to give the Secretary leave of absence a day or so.

The Conference was permitted to draw on the Book Concern for six hundred dollars, and on the Chartered Fund for seventy-three dollars and sixty-eight cents. The Book Concern made annually

enough money to pay all its current expenses, the salaries of the bishops, the expenses of the delegates to the General Conference, and annual dividends to the Conferences, which helped very much in relieving extreme necessitous cases among itinerants.

A well-filled box of clothing was received from the Ladies' Sewing Society at Natchez, and the preacher to be stationed there was instructed to present to the Society our grateful acknowledgments.

Dr. A. L. P. Green, of the Tennessee Conference, was present at our Conference as agent for the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, published at Nashville, and preached several of his eloquent and powerful sermons to the delight and edification of the preachers and people. It was an intellectual and spiritual luxury to hear this Apollos of the Tennessee Conference in the prime of his manhood. "See," said Thomas Clinton, after listening to one of his eloquent and pathetic sermons, "what our itinerancy can do, under the blessing of God, in developing uneducated and unfledged youths into the greatest preachers on the continent!"

John H. Davidson, one of our promising and useful young men, had married before being admitted into full connection; and there being still a few of the old anti-marrying party in the Conference, they called him to account for violating a rule of the Conference. He informed them that he had married by the advice of his brethren, and that he did not know of the existence of such a rule in the Conference, there being no such prohibitory rule

either in the Discipline or Bible. Upon the ground of his ignorance of the rule they agreed to make an exception of his case, and continued him on trial.

Samuel W. Hankins was a man of education and good preaching abilities, but somewhat impulsive and inclined to take an ultra view of the unfaithfulness of the ministry and membership of the Church. His mind seemed to sympathize with a morbid and dyspeptic body, and he would take a course in preaching which gave unnecessary offense. He was complained of at this Conference for "discussing questions of doubtful disputation calculated rather to bewilder than to edify his hearers." The Conference resolved that, in its judgment, he should be admonished by the Chair, which admonition was administered and well received.

Richard A. Stewart was a high-toned gentleman and a preacher of fair talents and usefulness, and had labored in the itinerancy four years. During the past year he had been precipitated into a provoking altercation with a prominent citizen. His case came up in Conference, and brought on a lengthy and earnest discussion. Various motions came before the Conference and were lost, until finally one passed requesting the Bishop to admonish him in the presence of the Conference that he had acted inconsistently with his ministerial character, and that he should be more guarded in the future. Mr. Stewart came forward and acknowledged himself blameworthy for indulging the passion into which he had been precipitated, and then the Conference excused him from receiving the admonition from the

Chair and granted him a location at his own request.

Two years ago a Board of Five Commissioners had been appointed, consisting of John Lane, B. M. Drake, J. G. Jones, Thomas Owens, and Green M. Rogers, to organize a Board of Trustees for our contemplated Centenary College, consisting of eight traveling preachers and five local preachers and laymen, making thirteen in all, who should have plenary power to receive propositions and to locate the college within the following year. It was afterwards moved and carried that they should not make the location until 1841, but in the meantime should receive and consider propositions for its location, and that the preachers should exert themselves in obtaining subscriptions to the college fund. In order to avail themselves of the prestige of a great name, some one introduced a resolution, which passed:

Resolved, That each preacher in charge of circuit and station be requested to use his best exertions to collect the average sum of fifty cents annually from each member of his charge to raise the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars to endow the Winans Professorship of Ancient Languages in Centenary College.

Some funds were collected, but not enough to endow the professorship.

During the interval various propositions were received by the Board for the location of the college, the most liberal being from Clinton, Miss., Sharon, in Madison County, and Brandon Springs, in Rankin County. The citizens of Clinton and its vicinity proposed to give us the Mississippi College, includ-

ing a good brick building for a primary department, and an additional bonus of twenty thousand dollars; the owners and patrons of Madison College, at Sharon, proposed to turn over the whole property to us, with additional aid, if we would locate there; while the owner of Brandon Springs offered to sell his whole establishment at a very reduced price if we would locate there. Both Sharon and Clinton were in the midst of wealthy and intelligent communities, with a fair representation of influential Methodist families. Sharon had no public line of commerce and travel near, either by water or railroad, so that all college supplies would have to be brought on wheels by ox and horse power. Clinton was on the Vicksburg and Jackson Railroad, which was now getting into operation, with a prospect of extension and being connected with lateral roads at no distant day. This, in addition to its central location, gave it a decided advantage over Sharon, and a majority of the Board of Commissioners were so certain that the location would be made there that Hon. J. R. Nicholson, Hon. Henry G. Johnson, and Rev. Thomas Ford, of that vicinity, were elected members of the Board of Trustees. During the flush times in Mississippi, when Brandon money could be easily obtained by the shovel full, some adventurer, having found a sulphur spring in the pine woods about twelve miles northeast of Brandon, concluded to start a great central watering place, and for this purpose borrowed Brandon money and built two or three large central houses and two wings of neat cottages around the spring, with grounds and fixtures for amusement. It promised

to flourish for a year or so; but it was far in the interior, away from the wealthy, intelligent, and pleasure-loving communities of the State, away from all commercial supplies, and surrounded by an unappreciative community; so that its race was short and its downfall certain. When the proprietor saw that it was a failure as a watering place, he offered it to Mr. Lane at a low figure for the college. He and a few others favored it as our most eligible location. They were pleased with the low price of the property, the adaptability of the houses for college purposes, and the healthy, quiet, forest-like appearance of the campus and its surroundings. They lost sight of the many inconveniences and additional expenses growing out of its isolation from commercial depots and thoroughfares, and its great distance from the wealthy and college-supporting communities of the Conference. The trustees had determined to have a meeting early enough in the summer of 1841, at Clinton, to make the location and get the president and professors in time to open the college the ensuing fall. The majority still favored Clinton; but, fearing that Mr. Lane would carry his point if a quorum of the Board should be present, Hon. J. R. Nicholson, Hon. Henry G. Johnson, and Rev. Thomas Ford absented themselves, hoping thereby to break the quorum and defer the location until a further demonstration could be made in favor of Clinton. In this they were disappointed, a legal quorum being present. Had they been in their places, the location would have been made at Clinton; or had they apprised the friends of Clinton of the cause of their absence,

the location would have been deferred until they should be present. Their absence led to the inference that the interest of the community in the college had abated, or that they feared they could not raise the twenty thousand dollars which they had pledged to raise if the location should be made there. After a long debate and a patient waiting for the absent trustees, the final decision was deferred until a night session. Still hearing nothing from the absent trustees, Clinton was dropped, and the contest was then between Sharon and Brandon Springs. Those who were opposed to hiding the college out in the woods east of Pearl River favored Sharon. There were ten trustees present, including the writer, who acted as chairman; and after a protracted debate on the relative merits of the two places, the vote was taken by ayes and noes. The names being called, four voted for Sharon and four for Brandon Springs, leaving Thomas Owens to give the casting vote. Mr. Owens felt the delicacy and responsibility of his position; but such was his confidence in the judgment of Mr. Lane that he was inclined to follow his lead, and gave the deciding vote for Brandon Springs. The property of the Mississippi College has since fallen into the hands of the Baptists, who have both a flourishing male and female college there. Rev. Thomas C Thornton, D.D., late of the Baltimore Conference, was elected President of our college; and with an able faculty, he soon had it in operation, with a somewhat flattering prospect of ultimate success.

New Orleans was selected as the place for the next Conference.

Nearly all of our unoccupied territory had been set off with the Texas and Memphis Conferences; so there was little room for the formation of new missions and circuits, except for the benefit of the colored people, and where the multiplication of churches and preachers made it necessary to divide the larger circuits into two or more pastoral charges. William Winans was continued on the Natchez District; William Langarl was stationed in Natchez; Benjamin Jones, in Woodville; Elijah Steele, at Poydras Street Church, in New Orleans; William H. Watkins, at Spain Street Mission; and Philip Dieffenworth, at Lafayette Mission. Robert D. Smith was elected to the presidency of the Elizabeth Female Academy; and Thomas Clinton, who was very popular both with the planters and their negroes, was continued on the Wilkinson Colored Mission. Other colored missions in the district were supplied by local preachers.

Barnabas Pipkin was continued on the Baton Rouge District, with Samuel W. Spear stationed in Baton Rouge; Enoch N. Talley, on the Paulding District; Green M. Rogers, on the Sharon District, with James McClennen stationed in Jackson; Benjamin A. Houghton, on Lake Providence District; John Lane, on the Vicksburg District, with Preston Cooper and James Gwinn (supernumerary) stationed in Vicksburg, Joshua T. Heard in Raymond and Clinton, and Levi Pearce in Port Gibson and Grand Gulf.

Western Louisiana was divided into two districts, Alexandria and Monroe, with Richmond Randle on the former and David M. Wiggins on the latter.

Charles K. Marshall and Elias R. Porter, two of our most eloquent and popular young ministers, were appointed collecting agents for our new college.

Samuel M. Kingston was transferred to the Tennessee Conference and B. C. Weir to the Arkansas Conference.

The Conference had greatly improved in the style and moral force of the preachers. The four years' course of study, rigidly enforced, had developed many of our young men into preachers that would do for any place in town or country. Numbers of them were stirring revivalists, and were instrumental in turning many to the Lord.

The whole territory was covered with a network of pastoral charges, the churches and the number of the ministers had increased, the circuits were made smaller, so that preaching was confined more to the Sabbath day, with fewer week-day congregations. This gave the preachers more time for study, for pastoral visiting, attention to Sabbath schools, etc., which most of them improved to both their own good and the advancement of the Church.

The numbers in society are not found in the journal for this year, but there was considerable increase, especially in our colored membership. Since the introduction of oral catechetical instruction our colored missions had been prosperous.

CHAPTER XX.

1841.

FOR this ecclesiastical year we held our Conference in the city of New Orleans. This gave the travel-worn itinerants a very enjoyable holiday, for few of them had ever taken a passage on the great inland sea or seen the great Southern emporium. The horses were left at home, or with some friend near the port of entry to await the return of the preachers, who went aboard the palatial steamers for a trip of from one to three or four hundred miles. This writer descended the mighty river with a cheerful company of Conference seekers, the central figure of which was Dr. Thomas C. Thornton, the newly elected President of Centenary College. The Doctor was a very agreeable fellow-voyager, and a fluent and edifying talker. The river and coast scenery was new to most of us, and we were anxious to see as much of it as possible. The port of New Orleans, with its immense variety of water craft and miles of wharf, was an imposing sight to the inland itinerants; and the city, with its one hundred thousand inhabitants of all nationalities, creeds, and colors, was by far the largest city they had ever seen. We were very hospitably entertained during our Conference, but widely scattered over the city. Street cars had not been invented in those days, and in

going back and forth we had either to walk or take a twenty-five-cent ride in an omnibus jolting over the boulder-paved streets.

Bishop Waugh was present, full of the spirit of doing all he could to advance the interests of our Church in our great Southwestern city, which had so long been under the spiritual domination of a misled and misleading priesthood. The Bishop opened the Conference with the usual services of reading the Holy Scriptures, singing, and prayer, to which he added a very feeling and effective address, showing what wonders God had wrought in other days and in other places through the instrumentality of Methodism, and what it could also accomplish in New Orleans if we were faithful to our trust. He exhorted us to pray and labor for a revival then and there; to have altar work at the conclusion of each service, if possible; and to strive to get as many souls converted as we could. When the Bishop could, he attended our night services, and did some good and powerful praying for penitents at the altar. He must have been a revivalist in his day of circuit preaching. The writer was on the Committee of Public Worship; and as his younger colleagues left the matter largely to him, he was careful to keep such men in the pulpit as sympathized with the Bishop's views. God visited his people, and several young men were brought under the power of saving grace who afterwards entered the ministry. Methodism received an impulse that placed it on higher ground than it had ever before occupied in the Crescent City.

Samuel W. Spear was again elected Secretary, with John N. Hamill his assistant.

Thomas C. Thornton presented his certificate of transfer from the Baltimore Conference. Twenty-eight members were present at the first call of the roll, and others were soon added. The first day was consumed in arranging the standing and special committees, reading communications from Book Agents, etc.

On the second morning the regular disciplinary questions were taken up. Fourteen were admitted on trial, including Reuben B. Ricketts, who, after traveling two years, had been discontinued at his own request; Daniel A. J. Parker, William B. Lewis, and James Naconchia were discontinued at their own request. Nine remained on trial; nine were received into full connection; nine were ordained deacons and five elders. Samuel Walker and Jacob Ellinger, both of the Tennessee Conference, were readmitted; Washington Ford and Spencer Waters were located at their own request; Robert R. Gill, Byron Benton, and Samuel W. Hankins were voted a supernumerary relation; and John I. E. Byrd, William Stephenson, Thomas Owens, Jesse Lee, and Thomas Clinton were ~~superannuated~~. James Gwinn and Elijah Steele had died. Seven were elected to deacon's orders from the local ranks and four to elder's orders.

Rev. Fountain E. Pitts, of the Tennessee Conference, came to our Conference to represent the interests of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, which was patronized extensively within our bounds. By his eloquence and the holy unction that attended

his ministry he made a fine impression for good on the congregation and endeared himself to the preachers.

The trustees of Centenary College reported, and the report was adopted. The dissatisfaction about the location of the college, with other causes, had occasioned five vacancies in the original board, and B. M. Drake and William Winans were appointed a committee to nominate suitable persons to fill said vacancies. They nominated Robert D. Smith and Elias R. Porter, of the Conference; and Hon. Henry Mounger, of Jasper County, G. Felder, of Rankin County, and William Lum, of Warren County, laymen. Benjamin M. Drake was appointed auditor of the Centenary Fund, and also to receive the money collected for the endowment of the Winans' Professorship of Ancient Languages.

The trustees of the Elizabeth Female Academy made their report, which was adopted, and everything done to further the interests of the academy that the Conference could do; but there had been such an emigration of its best patrons to the new countries that it was evidently on the decline.

An encouraging report was received from the trustees of the Vicksburg Female Academy. Vacancies in the board were filled, and Abner W. Chapman was continued in the presidency.

The Woodville Female Academy was still in successful operation under our patronage, and B. M. Drake, Benjamin Jones, and Elias R. Porter were appointed a visiting committee.

The Conference was permitted to draw on the Book Concern this year for seven hundred dollars,

and on the Chartered Fund for sixty-nine dollars, to bring up the deficient salaries of some of our needy preachers and to aid the widows and orphans of our deceased brethren.

Complaints were made against Enoch Whatley, the junior preacher on Rankin Circuit; but as they were not in a shape to be investigated at Conference, the case was referred to the presiding elder of the Paulding District for adjudication according to the law of the Church; and the Conference requested the Bishop to leave Mr. Whatley without an appointment for this year, which request was granted.

Bradford Frazee was charged in due form with "being a common detractor from the ministerial character, ministerial talent, and usefulness" of his brethren; and specifications were given in relation to four ministers with whom he had been more or less associated during the past year, including his presiding elder and colleague on Madison Circuit. His case was referred to a committee of five, consisting of John G. Jones, Samuel W. Spear, Benjamin Jones, Preston Cooper, and William Langarl, for investigation, who reported that while the evidence before them did not sustain the charge in a criminal sense, yet the testimony in relation to the specifications showed that Mr. Frazee had talked incautiously about others. The report was adopted and his character passed, and he obtained a transfer to the Michigan Conference. Mr. Frazee was a man of fair learning and a fluent and interesting preacher, but he had sharp corners in his social qualities that irritated his associates and kept him in trouble most of the time. One of his great faults was that

of speaking disparagingly of the talents of his ministerial brethren. After two years in the Michigan Conference Mr. Frazee located, returned to Mississippi as a local preacher, and died in Warren County.

The usual well-filled box of clothing was received from the Ladies' Sewing Society at Natchez. The box was placed in the hands of the presiding elders to be distributed among their most needy preachers.

During his two years' pastorate at Woodville Elijah Steele had seemed to grow in favor both with God and man. As a refined and elegant gentleman he was a model; but he was infinitely more: he was adorned with all the Christian graces; his piety was deep and uniform; he indeed seemed to be "unspotted from the world;" his preaching was of the very highest order for his age in the ministry. What he had to do was promptly done; what he had to say was fluently, earnestly, and appropriately said. Being a close and successful student, he brought out of his treasury things new as well as old. There was such a freshness in his sermons that none seemed to grow weary in hearing him from Sabbath to Sabbath. When appointed to Poydras Street Church, in New Orleans, he sensibly felt the responsibility of his position; but he did not go there with such self-distrust as he went to Port Gibson four years previously. He entered upon his work in the Spirit of his Master, determined to give himself wholly to the duties of a faithful pastor. The people soon began to place a high estimate on their new pastor. His congregation increased, a religious feeling deep and wide began to pervade the attend-

ants on his ministry, and there were many evidences of his increasing usefulness. Just in the midst of these brightening prospects that terrible scourge of our Southern cities, yellow fever, became epidemic in the city. It began to spread with marked fatality in August. Mr. Steele determined to remain and run the risk of an acclimating. He was calm and thoughtful about what might be the result. He said he desired to live only to get good and do good; he did not feel the least alarmed at the possibility of his falling a victim to the fatal epidemic. He continued diligent in preaching, attending the social meetings of the Church, visiting the bereaved and sick, and burying the dead until Monday night, September 6, when, while leading a missionary prayer meeting, he took the fatal chill. His arrangements had all been previously made as to where he would be sick, who would be his physician, and who his nurses. Mr. James Ross, the friend selected to take charge of him in case he was attacked, immediately took him to his residence, called in his physician, and had everything done to mitigate the attack and prevent its fatal termination. For two days there was considerable hope of his recovery; but after this all the indications were that he would die. He had become so familiar with the different stages of the disease that he was fully apprised of his situation. He became most triumphant in prospect of laying down the cross and taking up the crown; said he had no doubt of his acceptance with God; and even in that partial delirium which precedes dissolution gave utterance to expressions, "How beautiful!" "How glorious!" which exhibited the

happy frame of mind he enjoyed. Just as he was stepping on the other shore he uttered as his last dying whisper, "I am safe." He died on Friday, September 10, about 4 P.M. His remains were deposited in a copper coffin, then inclosed in one of mahogany, and taken to his church, where religious services were performed by his colleagues, Messrs. Dieffenworth and Watkins, assisted by other Protestant ministers in the city. They were then deposited in the private vault of James Ross, to await the action of the Conference, which was to assemble in the city on the 24th of November. In the meantime the Church prepared a substantial white marble tomb in the Cypress Grove Cemetery, about two miles from the city, as his final resting place until the dead in Christ shall rise. At an early hour of the Conference, by special request of the official board of Poydras Street Church, the Conference arranged for a memorial service. The remains were again placed in the altar of the Church; and after an impressive funeral discourse from Mr. Winans on "The child shall die a hundred years old," the immense procession of eight or ten hundred people with the remains was conveyed by a line of cars to the Cypress Grove Cemetery, where the burial service was performed beautifully and impressively by Bishop Waugh. Thus ended the short but remarkably brilliant, attractive, and useful career of Elijah Steele. To the open frankness and simplicity of a child he added the nobility of the high-toned and honorable Christian gentleman and the purity and disinterestedness of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He was a little over six feet high and remarkably slen-

der and stood very erect. His countenance was sharp, and would not have been considered beautiful apart from that "wisdom that made his face shine." It is sweet to think of meeting such a lovely spirit where "there shall be no more night."

The old file leader, William Winans, was now beyond the meridian of life, and evidently declining in physical strength. As preaching orthodox, logical, and powerful sermons was his strong point, the Conference made a unanimous request that he prepare a volume of his sermons and submit them to the Book Committee, at Cincinnati, for publication. He reluctantly promised to do it as he might find leisure from other imperious duties. A committee was appointed to receive and examine in manuscript each sermon as it was written as to its literary and orthodox merits. In process of time he prepared seventeen sermons or, as he styled them, "Discourses on Fundamental Religious Subjects;" but they were not ready for the press before the separation of the Church took place, so that they were not published until 1855, at the Publishing House, in Nashville, by Stevenson & Owen. The personal friends of Mr. Winans placed a high estimate on his discourses, and while reading them often have the image of the earnest and venerable man before the mind as when he delivered them originally from the pulpit.

The reports of committees all having been acted on, and votes of thanks having been made to the citizens and other Churches for their hospitality in entertaining the Conference; and having fixed the next annual session to be at Jackson, Miss., No-

vember 30, 1842, the appointments and adjournment closed the first Conference in New Orleans.

William Winans was continued on the Natchez District, with the addition of Baton Rouge; Poydras Street Church, in New Orleans, was left to be supplied; William H. Watkins was stationed at Spain Street and Duvergebürg, and William Langarl at Lafayette; Robert W Kennon was stationed at Woodville, and Lewellyn Campbell was President of the Elizabeth Female Academy, which was mainly under the control of Mrs. Campbell, a daughter of our deceased Texas missionary, Dr. Martin Ruter. Richmond Randle was stationed in Natchez, and William G. Gould took his place on the Alexandria District; Samuel W Spear succeeded Benjamin A. Houghton on Lake Providence Mission District, while Mr. Houghton was stationed in Jackson, Miss. The other districts retained their former presiding elders, and remained about as they were the previous year. Preston Cooper was continued in Vicksburg, and Abner W. Chapman in charge of the Vicksburg Female Academy

In addition to the transfer of Bradford Frazee to the Michigan Conference, James C. Finley was transferred to the Illinois Conference and Joshua T. Heard to the Alabama Conference.

This was a year of general prosperity. Nearly all of our pastoral charges were given a good average preacher, and numbers of them had two preachers. The aggregate number of our members now was twelve thousand three hundred and ninety-four white, six thousand and forty-eight colored, and one hundred and ten Indian members, giving us a

grand total of eighteen thousand five hundred and fifty-two. The net increase for the year was two thousand five hundred and twenty-one white, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine colored, and ten Indian members.

CHAPTER XXI.

1842.

THE Mississippi Conference met at Jackson, Miss., for the first time November 30, 1842. Bishop Andrew was present, and conducted the opening religious services. Samuel W Spear was again elected Secretary, and John N. Hamill Assistant Secretary. The hours for meeting and adjournment were fixed, the standing and some special committees appointed, and the regular disciplinary questions taken up. We were but little more than fairly adjusted in our seats when Bishop Andrew had us regularly at work. Twenty-one were admitted on trial, and among them a very fair proportion became conspicuous for superior talents and extensive usefulness.

Among those who have died we mention James H. Merrill, Samuel J. Davies, James Walton, Charles A. Whitall, Hayden Sewell, Joab Evans, and Thomas Ford. James H. Merrill and Thomas Ford died in a local relation. Charles A. Whitall, after a few years, took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church. Samuel J. Davies died a member of the Louisiana Conference, and James Walton, Hayden Sewell, and Joab Evans died members of our Conference. James Walton was one of Nature's noblemen; but for twenty years he hesitated to

obey his call to the ministry, which he greatly regretted in after life. During all that time he was an active and liberal layman, and made himself felt as a Methodist. He was public-spirited and popular as a citizen, and was elected to represent his district in the State Senate only a few years before he entered the ministry. In our great revival in Starkville (the place of his residence), in 1839, he was greatly blessed with a renewed sense of the presence and love of God, and entered with his whole soul into the work of the revival. His oldest daughter, Mary, then about fourteen years old, was the first one converted of more than one hundred converts that year at different meetings. (In after years she married Edwin Philips, one of our best young ministers, and made an excellent helpmeet for the itinerant.) In a week or ten days a very different scene turned up before his vision. He saw people of every age and gradation in society, and of all professions, brought to Christ. Some one facetiously remarked that "the Methodists had used up the whole Probate Court, judge, clerks, and all," which was the case. Judge Ames made an excellent Church member. The old Doctor, with all his professional knowledge, did not seem to know God's plan of working "from the least to the greatest."

Hayden Sewell was, like Luke, "the beloved physician." When he admitted the call of God to the work of the ministry, he gave up his profession and entered upon the duties of the itinerancy with earnest and well-directed zeal. He excelled in getting souls converted. This seemed to be his main point of success.

The great object of the Christian ministry is to "teach transgressors the ways of God and get sinners converted unto him;" and after a sinner becomes truly penitent, we see no reason why his conversion should be deferred a day or an hour if he is properly instructed and encouraged. Of the twenty-one admitted on trial at this Conference, Calvin A. Frazee is a local preacher in Southwestern Louisiana or Texas, and Philo M. Goodwin is a superannuated member of the Louisiana Conference. William R. Nicholson, whose conversion we witnessed in a camp meeting altar in 1836, and who became one of the most talented and popular young preachers in our Conference, in a few years left us, without pausing to bid us affectionately farewell or thanking us for being instrumental in making him all that he was as a minister, and took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, for what reason is not very definitely known. Within a few years of the same time Jesse Lee, of our Conference, and William R. Nicholson, Charles A. Whittall, and Charles P. Clark, who were set off with the Louisiana Conference, left the oldest and most scriptural Episcopal Church in the United States (the Methodist Episcopal Church) and sought orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and were all ordained except Jesse Lee.

Charles P. Clark was admitted into the New York Conference in 1826, and performed much faithful and acceptable service in the itinerancy until 1844, when he was transferred from the Troy to the Mississippi Conference as a missionary to the French population in Louisiana. He had learned to speak

the French language fluently, and good results were expected from the Mission. But he professed to become terribly alarmed about the proposed separation of the Church into a Northern and a Southern jurisdiction; said the Methodist Episcopal Church was all tumbling to pieces about his ears, and he would make his escape from the falling ruin without delay; and he bolted into the Protestant Episcopal Church. Clark left the French of Southern Louisiana to perish in their hereditary ignorance of the true faith; and the last we heard of him he was going glimmering to the great West, hunting for a place to preach.

Daniel A. J. Parker is still effective in our Conference; and Joseph Nicholson, after many years of hard and faithful service on colored missions, piny woods circuits, and districts, is now a sweet-spirited old minister, reposing on the superannuated roll.

Twelve were continued on trial, while George W. Goza, Anthony T. Simmons, Abner W. Chapman, and James Adams were discontinued at their own request. As the journal showed that Reuben B. Ricketts had traveled two consecutive years before he was discontinued at his own request, to which he had now added a third year, it was moved and carried that he be now received into full connection and elected to deacon's orders. Seven were received into full connection and ordained deacons, and four to elder's orders. Jacob Ellinger, formerly of the Tennessee Conference, Henry T. Jones, late of the Georgia and Alabama Conferences, and Isaac Taylor and David O. Shattuck, formerly of our Conference, were readmitted. Asbury H. Shanks had

been transferred to us from the Alabama Conference, but for some reason he was superannuated, and does not appear in the list of appointments until the next year. Alexander S. Parker, Joshua I. Jones, Cotman Methven, Daniel Leggett, and Byron Benton were located at their own request; Enoch N. Talley, John G. Jones, Asbury H. Shanks, Samuel Walker, Jesse Lee, Samuel W. Hankins, William Stephenson, and Thomas Owens were superannuated; and Alexander M. Whitney had died at his post of duty. From the local ranks sixteen were elected to deacon's orders, and five to the office of elder.

Alexander M. Whitney was the son of Hon. John M. and Clarissa Whitney, and was born in Adams County, Miss., January 19, 1837; but grew to manhood near Fayette, Jefferson County, Miss., where his father had settled on a plantation. His grandfather Whitney was one of John Paul's (alias (Paul Jones's) privateers in his celebrated sea fights with the British men-of-war during the Revolutionary War, and his mother was a lineal descendant of the venerable Rev. Samuel Swayze, mentioned in the early part of this History as the first Protestant minister that ever came to the Natchez country. Both his parents were substantial and liberal members of our Church, and by their example and influence contributed largely to the building up and perpetuity of Methodism at Fayette. Alexander was sent to Augusta College, in Kentucky, where he received a liberal English education. He was from his childhood remarkably exemplary in his moral deportment. At the age of eighteen he was

brought under strong religious feelings, and committed himself fully to seeking the sensible forgiveness of his sins. His state of penitence was connected with some peculiar trials. At one time he felt that he was called of God to preach, and that probably he never would be converted until he attempted to preach; at another time he would be tempted that the whole of his concern on the subject of religion was merely human excitement, if not Satanic influence. His extreme modesty and diffidence prevented him, for a time, from revealing the unhappy state of his mind to his spiritual guides; but finally he unbosomed himself, was soon led into the light, and received a satisfactory evidence of his acceptance in Christ. He soon consented that it was his duty to preach the gospel; but such was his extreme diffidence that it was painful to witness with what fear and trembling he made his first efforts. He was admitted on trial in December, 1838, at the Grenada Conference. In 1839 he was the junior preacher on Madison Circuit, and spent most of his rest days in and near Sharon, where the writer then lived; and we became greatly attached to him as a modest, prudent, earnest, and diligent young preacher. Though brought up in the lap of ease and affluence, he never demurred to going any distance from home or to any circuit, no matter how laborious or sickly it might be. His last appointment was to Chicot Circuit, embracing Cheneyville, south of Alexandria, La. On the first day of October, 1842, while preaching to a Sabbath congregation in Cheneyville, he was taken suddenly ill with what proved to be an

insidious attack of congestive fever. He closed his sermon hastily, and went to the house of John Dunwody, which had been the hospitable stopping place for all itinerant preachers from the days of the sainted Richmond Nolley, and continued to be until the old patriarch was transferred to paradise. Here Mr. Whitney was nursed with care and tenderness by Mr. and Mrs. Dunwody. For several days they did not think his case was dangerous, but he constantly expressed the belief that he would not recover. Not long before his attack he had been conversing with Mrs. Dunwody on the most desirable frame of mind to have in death, and expressed his preference for that of prayer rather than praise. On the fifth day of his illness he received great comfort in listening to Mrs. Dunwody reading portions of Scripture at his bedside. Soon after she ceased to read he requested all present to unite with him in prayer. He led with unusual appropriateness and earnestness, and prayed with more than ordinary length. The burden of his prayer was for dying grace. He closed his prayer with his usual distinct "Amen." He then asked his physician if he considered him in the full possession of his mental faculties. The physician assured him that he was. He then expressed his gratitude to God for a praying frame of mind, and asked Mrs. Dunwody if she recollected their late conversation on the most desirable frame of mind in which to die. He requested the family to write to his parents, and then almost immediately fell asleep in Jesus. Richmond Nolley no longer sleeps alone in Louisiana soil; scores of others, including traveling and local

preachers, have fallen on that battlefield covered with honorable scars, and now await the resurrection of the just. The Conference requested B. M. Drake to preach a funeral sermon on Tuesday night in memory of our deceased young brother, and also instructed the Secretary to "communicate the sympathies of this Conference to his bereaved parents."

Before we lose sight of the fact, we wish to say to the reader that of the twenty-one admitted on trial at this Conference seven were recommended by the various charges in New Orleans. The triumphant death of Elijah Steele, in connection with the good impressions made by our Conference soon after, proved a blessing to the Church in that city, and seemed to be the means of awakening the young men of the Church to a sense of their duty to God and the souls of men. We know of no better evidence of a living, growing Church than to see their young men entering the ministry and devoting their lives to the salvation of their fellow-men. A Church that never produces a preacher is a very unproductive Church. He whose sole prerogative it is to call and send forth more laborers generally honors, sooner or later, every true, living, active Church by calling some of her young men to the work of the ministry. And every Church should not only pray for an increase of laborers, with a willingness to see her own sons, brothers, and husbands enter the field, but should constantly be on the lookout for such cases and give all pious young men who are exercised on the subject of preaching timely advice and encouragement. God's chosen vessels to

bear his name before the people are generally modest and self-distrusting, and need to be nursed into the ministry by more experienced Christians. It is a sign of spiritual deadness for any settled Church organization never to produce a preacher.

Those of us who had long and prayerfully watched the slow rise and progress of Methodism in New Orleans were greatly encouraged at the admission of seven candidates for the ministry at one time from the city.

Our educational interests were all duly considered by the Conference, reports on each of our institutions being made by committees appointed for that purpose. The most difficult case to manage was Centenary College, at the Brandon Springs. The Board of Trustees, the President and Faculty, with our two superior traveling agents, Messrs. Marshall and Porter, were all doing their best to make a first-class college, and their united efforts were attended with some success; but all began to fear that the college was in the wrong place; it was too far from all the usual feeders of a prosperous college. Our people have been slow to learn that if we wish our seminaries of learning and our churches to be well filled we must put them right in the midst of the people whose patronage we expect, instead of hiding them out in the suburbs or putting them away from public highways because we can get a cheaper lot by so doing. We should rather place them like a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, so that their presence and accessibility will encourage patronage. The great error committed in the location of the first Centenary

College was placing it far away from the patronizing public.

President Thornton was appointed by the Conference to visit the Arkansas Conference in the interest of Centenary College.

About 1836 or 1837 a Union College and Female Academy were projected at Sharon, Madison County, Miss., and had several years of encouraging prosperity on the self-supporting plan. The writer, who then lived in Sharon, exposed himself to censure for giving it as his opinion that the schools on the union plan would beget jealousies and strife and would become a failure in the end. This proved to be the result sooner than we anticipated. Those who were the legitimate owners of the property of the two schools sent a delegation to this Conference duly authorized to place the real estate and all the buildings under the entire control of the Conference, provided we would patronize and govern the schools as we did our other seminaries. John G. Jones, Green M. Rogers, and Thomas Owens were appointed a committee to take the communication from Sharon under consideration and report to the Conference. The committee reported in favor of accepting the proposition from Sharon, which report was adopted by the Conference; so that from this date the Sharon schools, known as Madison College and Sharon Female Academy, have been under our control and patronage. Being off the line of railroad communication, Sharon is now looked upon as somewhat inaccessible; and most of the original trustees and many of the first patrons having died, the schools are now in a depressed condition.

But whatever may be their future history, we have many good reasons for gratitude to God for their past existence. In their more than thirty years' existence many fine scholars, both male and female, have been made there; and in the numerous revivals in the schools and Sharon Church scores of pupils, who in their various localities have proved themselves to be good Christians, have been converted. In the cemetery adjoining the church reposes the dust of some of the best Christian men and women.

Rev. Leroy Swormstedt, the Book Agent at Cincinnati, was present at our Conference and, after submitting the yearly exhibit of the Book Concern, began to press the collection of its claims with his characteristic promptness and pertinacity. He succeeded very well in collecting what was due the Western Book Concern, except in six cases. In one case the parties were not even members of our Church, and in the other five they were ministers who had located. Mr. Swormstedt turned their accounts over to the Conference, and the Conference placed them in the hands of the preachers and presiding elders who might have charge of their various localities for immediate collection or additional security. As one of a union of Annual Conferences we were part owners of our publishing houses, and hence both duty and interest required us to coöperate with the Agents in collecting their claims. Mr. Swormstedt was popular among us both as a minister of superior talents and as Book Agent, and after he had concluded his agency among us for the present the Conference, by a rising and

unanimous vote, "tendered him their thanks for his faithful and energetic discharge of his duties as Book Agent."

Rev. William Capers, D.D., of the South Carolina Conference, was at this time one of the traveling Secretaries of our Connectional Missionary Society; and not being able to visit our Conference in person, he wrote us a very impressive letter on the subject of increased liberality to the missionary cause. From the resolutions that followed the reading of this letter in favor of greatly increased liberality we infer that it had a profound effect on the Conference.

Rev. John B. McFerrin, as Editor of the *South-western Christian Advocate*, published at Nashville, Tenn., was present at our Conference in the interest of that paper. As it was the adopted organ of our Conference, we took a lively interest in its circulation and renewed our pledge to sustain it. The Conference, "by a rising and unanimous vote, highly approved of Brother McFerrin as the Editor."

Horace M. Booth, an educated young man and an exemplary and faithful young minister, was at this Conference eligible to elder's orders, and by his brethren was considered worthy and well qualified for that high and holy office; but he had weighed what he considered the necessary qualifications of an elder, and the import of the vows he was required to take, with all their additional responsibilities and duties, until he felt constrained to ask the Conference not to elect him until he had further time to seek a better mental and spiritual

qualification for the duties and responsibilities of the high ministerial order.

The committee appointed to examine the class of the second year had men on it who were inclined to be ultra and too exacting. Being governed by their report, the Conference at first rejected five of the seven candidates for admission into full connection and election to deacon's orders; but, after time for deliberation and inquiry into the character of the examination the young men underwent, their cases were severally reconsidered and they were admitted and elected.

We make the course of study imperious on our undergraduates, and their annual examinations should be literally and intelligently confined to that course of study.

The case of Enoch Whatley, which last year was referred to the presiding elder of the district in which he might live, and for which reason he had been left without appointment, had not been attended to; and it again came before the Conference. Mr. Whatley not being present, and his representative stating that there were "serious complaints against him," his case was again referred to the presiding elder of the district in which he might be found for immediate investigation according to the Discipline. Perhaps we shall learn, after a year or so more, what finally became of this troublesome case.

The examining committees for the next Conference were announced by Bishop Andrew, that of the second year being increased from three to five.

Woodville, Miss., was elected as the place of our

next meeting, and Bishop Andrew gave the time as November 29, 1843.

The appointments were announced, and we adjourned in peace and love.

The newly named pastoral charges now found in the General Minutes were all made from parts of the older charges, and the same may be said of the newly named districts. Our whole Conference territory was, to some extent, occupied, and our work now consisted mostly in developing, filling up, and maturing the charges already in hand. We had nine districts and seventy-five pastoral charges, including our colored missions. The names of several districts were changed to suit their newly adjusted territory, and one additional district was made. The presiding elders were as last year, except Samuel W. Spear, whose district had been absorbed.

John N. Hamill, who took the place of Enoch N. Talley on the Paulding District, and Lewellyn Campbell, who was appointed on the remodeled Vicksburg District, were new presiding elders, having never filled the office before. Mr. Hamill was a very self-sacrificing and devoted minister of the gospel. Except a little apparent tediousness at times, Mr. Hamill was a choice preacher, and his clear expositions of the Word of God were listened to with great interest. Lewellyn Campbell was, in some respects, a man different in style from most men. He had been brought up an orphan without any of kindred blood within his knowledge. His early educational advantages were quite limited; but he possessed a capacious intellect susceptible of vast expansion. He early acquired a taste for reading and

research, and was capable of investigating profitably the largest historical and theological works extant. After weighing a subject carefully in all its bearings, he formed his conclusions independently. He wrote but little for the public eye. In preaching he was wholly extemporaneous. His mission seemed to be one of instruction, reproof, and admonition. He was for driving away all false doctrines and unscriptural dogmas, as well as all practices of evil tendency. People sometimes pretended to be offended at his plainness of speech, and yet he was a very popular preacher. His style of preaching was elevated, and there was nothing either in his language or manner unbecoming the dignity of the pulpit; but O what blistering, raking sermons we have sometimes heard him preach! Theories of dangerous tendency, false doctrines of every shade, and negative and positive vices in all their forms would be exposed in their most self-condemning colors. We have seldom heard such sermons, except from our dear old presiding elder, Thomas Griffin. Mr. Campbell made an excellent executive officer, and had the esteem and entire confidence of all the preachers in his charge. He was not what we usually term a revivalist, and had the good sense to know that his talents did not take that direction. But he was a firm believer in the great advantages of emotional, revival exercises, and never failed to put forward at his protracted and camp meetings the men who were gifted and successful in that department of the work; and he never seemed more happy than when any one of his colleagues became instrumental in producing a great religious excite-

ment in his large congregations. Mr. Campbell had a paragraph in his Christian experience that ought to be very edifying to many of his brethren. When he was appointed presiding elder, it took him far away from his family, and often so much off the mail routes that he could seldom hear from home. In this condition he was continually teased with the fear that his wife or one of his children might sicken and die in his absence. It occurred to his mind that this restless and annoying anxiety about his family grew out of his want of that "perfect love that casteth out fear" and his want of an entire consecration of his all to the work of the ministry; and, to use his own language, he said: "I asked God to sanctify me wholly, and he did it; and since that time I have had but little anxiety about sickness and death in my family when away from home, doing my Master's work."

In New Orleans William R. Nicholson was appointed to Poydras Street; William Langarl, to Lafayette; William H. Watkins, to Moreau Street; Frederick P. Nixon, to Duvergebürg; Charles A. Whitall, to the Seamen's Mission. Carrollton and the African Church were left to be supplied. This was a more encouraging state of affairs than we had ever before witnessed in the city and its environs. It was like the dawn of a bright day after a long and gloomy night. Mr. Whitall, who was appointed to the Seamen's Mission, was himself a practical sailor, and had acquired the title of captain from having at one time been in command of a merchant vessel. He was well versed in nautical phrases, and could find ready access to the confidence and hearts

of the sailors. In addition to organizing a Church among them and attending to all the usual pastoral duties, it was further required of him to distribute the Holy Scriptures in the various languages of the nationalities represented in the port of New Orleans. He seemed both in spirit and talents to be well adapted to the work which had been assigned him. He became very popular among the sons of the ocean, who looked upon him as one of themselves.

Thomas C. Thornton, D.D., was continued in the presidency of Centenary College, David O. Shattuck was continued as Professor of Law, and C. K. Marshall and E. R. Porter as Agents for the Endowment Fund.

We had this year a fair supply of preachers for the whole work.

Last year our protégé, Erastus R. Strickland, whose movements we noted with affectionate interest, was appointed to Opelousas Circuit, in Southwestern Louisiana. At a great sacrifice of home interests and domestic comforts he crossed the Father of Waters, and entered cheerfully on his work. After getting fairly out of the great Mississippi swamp, he was greatly delighted with the beautiful level and fertile Opelousas County, covered with fine plantations and prairies interspersed with forests of luxuriant timber. This had once been the circuit of Elisha W Bowman, Richmond Nolly, Thomas Nixon, and many others; but now it was his circuit, and he would go to work to improve it in every particular. Old churches must be repaired and improved and new ones built, the people must be visited and invited to attend the preaching of the word and

the ordinances of the house of God, the Bible must be circulated, especially among the Catholic population, with a good supply of religious tracts and small volumes, and the periodicals of the Church must be taken and read. As the result of his year's work, he was able to report a net increase of eighty white and eighty-five colored members, and among his net gains were several French and Spanish Catholics. This, with other successful assaults on the fortifications of sin and Satan, exposed him to some persecution; but in the midst of it all he enjoyed sweet communion with God and was happy in his work. The present year his name stands on Chicot Circuit, adjoining Opelousas, with James H. Stokes as his colleague; and as Opelousas was left to be supplied, our impression is that he still labored considerably on that. He worked in his usual way. He had a talent for letting the people know he was about and intent on building up the Church. As no statistics were reported from Chicot last year, we cannot tell precisely what his net increase this year was, but we know it was very considerable for that country. Preachers who have labored only in well-ordered Protestant communities can form but a faint idea of the difficulties to be overcome in Southwestern Louisiana. It is easier to get a score of persons into the Church in some well-instructed communities than one in that heterogeneous population. At the end of this year Mr. Strickland, having been to college, studying and practicing hardships for two years (the usual term required for graduation), returned to the East. We would like to give the reader a description of our old friend

as a preacher if we knew how. He is rather too prosy to be called poetical and too practical to be called romantic, and yet he is both poetical and romantic. He delights in tropes and illustrations taken from the great works of art and of nature; he likes to catch at the lightning vibrations of the telegraph, the breakneck speed of the railroad train, the resistless plunge of the ocean steamer over the mighty deep, the rolling billows, earthquakes, storms, and tempests, majestic mountains, and the grandeur of the whirling spheres, to illustrate some Bible truth he has in hand. Others without his peculiar caste of mind would break the force of truth by attempting to use such gorgeous imagery by way of illustration, but he does not because it is natural with him to do it. In his prime he had a fine voice for strength and distinctness; his sermons were always very enjoyable. He is full of Christian sympathy, and his peculiar way of expressing the effusions of his heart makes what he says go to the hearts of his hearers.

Notwithstanding many of our members annually emigrated to Texas, our net increase this year shows it to have been a prosperous year. We had an increase of one thousand one hundred and sixty white and one thousand and thirty colored members, and a decrease of seven Indians.

We omitted to mention in the usual connection that Thomas Benn and Solomon Holford, both of whom came to us from the Arkansas Conference by the retrocession of Louisiana, were transferred, Mr. Benn to the Erie Conference and Mr. Holford to the Arkansas Conference.

CHAPTER XXII.

1843.

THE Conference which closed our ministerial work for 1843 and inaugurated that for 1844 assembled at Woodville Miss., November 29, 1843. Bishop Soule was present as the responsible presiding officer, accompanied by Bishop Andrew, who took part in conducting the business of the Conference. Samuel W. Spear was again elected Secretary.

We had an unusual number of the celebrities of the Church present at this Conference. In addition to an extra bishop, Rev. John F. Wright, one of the Book Agents at Cincinnati, was present. Rev. John B. McFerrin, Editor of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, published at Nashville, Tenn., was present. It was adopted as one of the General Conference papers by the General Conference of 1836 at the joint recommendation of the Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and Holston Conferences, to which the Memphis Conference was added after its organization. Thomas Stringfield, of the Holston Conference, was elected by the General Conference its first Editor, and for this reason was transferred to the Tennessee Conference. A special committee was appointed to report on the present condition and future prospects of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, consisting of Thomas C. Thorn-

ton, Enoch N. Talley, and Asbury H. Shanks. President Thornton prepared an elaborate report, to which were appended five appropriate resolutions, all of which report and resolutions were cordially adopted by the Conference. The report sets forth the following facts: At the General Conference of 1840 the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* was found to be \$14,000 in debt, with, as we learn from the journals of the General Conference, outstanding claims of about \$18,000, one-half of which it was thought could be collected. The General Conference agreed to appropriate \$7,000 from the Book Concern to liquidate one-half of the indebtedness of the paper; and in case it could not pay the other half and live on its own resources after that, it was to be put into liquidation and turned over to the Tennessee Conference to be settled up to the best advantage. The General Conference of 1840 elected Rev. Charles A. Davis, of the Baltimore Conference, its Editor for the ensuing four years; but for some cause Mr. Davis failed to ascend the tripod, and the Tennessee Conference, whose prerogative it was to fill all vacancies *ad interim*, elected Rev. John B. McFerrin its Editor. Mr. McFerrin took a practical view of the situation and went to work in earnest, determined to pay off the old debt and make the paper self-supporting. By the present date he had reduced the old debt to a small amount and reported that the income of the paper more than paid all current expenses, that the number of subscribers had increased to six thousand, and that for the past year more new subscriptions had been received from the Mississippi and Alabama Conferences than

any other two of the patronizing Conferences. Both the committee and Conference earnestly recommended our ensuing General Conference to continue Mr. McFerrin in the editorial chair, which was accordingly done.

Rev. William Capers, D.D., our Southern Missionary Secretary, was also present, representing our missionary operations and collecting funds for our general missionary treasury. He was a great favorite with the Mississippians.

Among our noted visitors at this Conference we also mention Rev. Edmund S. Janes, of the New York Conference, who came as a Financial Secretary of the American Bible Society. Not only his superior pulpit abilities but his deep piety and unaffected gospel simplicity endeared him to our Conference. William Winans, Samuel W Spear, and Benjamin M. Drake were appointed a committee to confer with Dr. Janes on the subject of his agency, or, as the journal expresses it, "On the Bible Cause;" and they submitted an able report in favor of the American Bible Society, pledging it our unqualified support, whereupon Dr. Janes and Bishop Soule addressed the Conference, in their cogent style, in favor of the glorious effort being made by the united Protestant Churches to spread the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make all who read them "wise unto salvation" all over the world. It was doubtless this visit of Dr. Janes to the Southern Conferences that elevated him at the General Conference, held a few months subsequently, to the episcopal office which he has filled, and yet fills, with so much fidelity.

It seemed utterly impossible to get our Northern brethren to understand and appreciate our true position in the slaveholding States; and being largely in the majority, they would elect no man to the episcopal office, however well qualified he might be, who was connected with the ownership of slaves. We did not object to having a slaveholding bishop, provided he was worthy and well qualified for the office and sufficiently acquainted by practical observation with the state of affairs in the South not to be throwing obstacles in the way of our success in laboring for the salvation both of master and slave. Bishops Asbury, McKendree, Roberts, and Soule never owned a negro, and yet the slave owners of the South were always well pleased with their administration because they had mingled freely among them and had the good sense to understand and appreciate their providential circumstances.

Dr. Janes was not a member of the General Conference of 1844, but he was present, it being held in the bounds of his Annual Conference, and he being on hand as a Financial Agent of the American Bible Society. It had been determined to elect two additional bishops, and the Southern delegates began to look around for a man who, in addition to all other qualifications, had a sufficient practical knowledge of Southern institutions to avoid those blunders in his administration which would seriously hinder our usefulness both "to the bond and the free," when Benjamin M. Drake, of the Mississippi Conference, suggested Edmund S. Janes as the most desirable man in their reach. The suggestion was accepted almost unanimously by the Southern dele-

gates and by a sufficient number of conservative men in the North and West to secure his election; and at the few Conferences he held in the South, before the separation of the Church, he was highly esteemed as a presiding officer.

Immediately upon organization Conference entered on its routine business. The needed number of standing and special committees having been appointed and several communications having been read and referred to appropriate committees, the first question, "Who are admitted on trial?" was taken up, and twelve were admitted. In giving this number we have to correct both the journal and the General Minutes, the former giving eleven and the latter thirteen as the number admitted. Two of the number, Malachi Dubose and Charles Bremar, were from New Orleans. It does not follow as a matter of course that all who are recommended by the Quarterly Conferences are admitted at the Annual Conference, for unless the case is a clear one they undergo a rigid scrutiny as to their personal piety, talents, and prospective improvement in all the elements of ministerial ability and usefulness. Several applications were rejected at this Conference. Of those admitted, several have become conspicuous in talents and usefulness, among whom we may mention John Pipes, of the Louisiana Conference, and John W. Harman, late of our Conference.

Lewis Tiner, Edward F. Thwing, and Thomas Ford were discontinued at their own request; twenty were continued on trial; ten were received into full connection, nine of whom were ordained deacons, Samuel Dawson having been previously or-

dained as a local preacher; six were elected and ordained elders; William C. Payne, formerly of the Tennessee Conference, Richard M. Crowson, late of the Alabama Conference, and David Kinnear, late of the Missouri Conference, were readmitted in elder's orders; Reuben B. Ricketts, Enoch N. Talley, John J. Robertson, Charles K. Marshall, Isaac Taylor, Lorenzo D. Langford, Jacob Ellinger, and Enoch Whatley obtained locations; John G. Jones, Samuel Walker, Jesse Lee, William Stephenson, Thomas Owens, Thomas Clinton, and Richmond Randle were voted a superannuated relation, and Samuel W. Hankins had died; six local preachers were elected to deacon's and five to elder's orders.

Green M. Rogers was appointed to write the memoir of Samuel W. Hankins, but for some unknown reason it does not appear in the General Minutes. He was admitted on trial into the Tennessee Conference in November, 1833, and was appointed to Neely's Grove School, in the Cherokee Nation. At the end of this year he was transferred to the South Carolina Conference, but for some now unknown cause turned up in the Georgia Conference and was appointed to Nassau. In December, 1836, he located, and soon after came, with a small family, to Mississippi. In December, 1839, he entered the Mississippi Conference by readmission, and in 1840 his name stands on the Derbonne Circuit, in Northern Louisiana. In 1841 and 1842 he was superannuated, and sometime during the latter year he died, leaving a dependent family to share the little pittance collected annually for the widows and orphans of those who have died in the work. His wife and children received their pro rata share of

the meager fund as long as they were claimants, though he had done us but one year's service.

We received communications from the Genesee and New York Conferences, asking us to concur in a petition to the General Conference to alter the General Rule in reference to buying, selling, and holding slaves. With only one exception, the entire Conference of sixty-four votes voted nonconcurrency. Our Conference was never what abolitionists call proslavery, but was perhaps universally in favor of a gradual and judiciously conducted emancipation, which would ruin neither master nor slave. As to slavery itself, we did not feel ourselves responsible for its existence or perpetuity. We found it in existence here when we were born, and its existence and perpetuity guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the Constitutions and laws of the several slave States; and while as citizens of the country we felt free to exercise our franchises at the ballot box as we saw proper, in our ecclesiastical judicatories we would allow no interference with the civil institutions of the country. We felt that our calling was to preach "the gospel of the grace of God" with all earnestness and sincerity both to the bond and free, and to have interfered with domestic slavery would have shut us off not only from the privilege of preaching to the slaves but also to many of their owners. With many of the most enlightened statesmen of our Southern country, we believed that African slavery would terminate some day and somehow, but we did not believe that opinion any reason why we should let the current generations

of negro slaves go down to death and hell without the enlightened and persistent offers of salvation from sin and its eternal consequences through the gospel of the Son of God, and hence we always included them in our pastoral charges as far as we could have access to them; and when the way was open, we established regular missions among them to the utmost of our ability to supply them with competent pastors. We knew that we often exposed ourselves to the ridicule and contempt of a few wealthy, proud, and wicked slaveholders, but we were quite willing to bear that for the blessed privilege of preaching and instructing so many of the benighted sons and daughters of Africa. We have had our reward in seeing so many of them added to the household of faith, and that reward will be infinitely augmented when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. In some of our Southern Conferences there were at times bitter controversies on the subject of slavery, but the journal of our Conference from its beginning, in 1813, to the present writing, in 1875, has never been disfigured, in a single instance, with an entry interfering with this or any other civil institution of the country. We passed many resolutions to preach the gospel to slaves as effectually as possible and to do all we might be permitted to do for their mental and moral improvement; but as they were in bondage by the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the several slave States, we were always determined, as a body of Christian ministers, to leave their future emancipation to our enlightened statesmen and the providence of God.

We also received a communication from the New York Conference invoking our concurrence in a petition to the General Conference to change our General Rule on the subject of "drunkenness, or drinking spirituous liquors, unless in cases of necessity." We voted sixty-two nonconcurring against only two concurring. As a Conference we have always been loyal to our General Rules.

About this date the subject of publishing a well-selected and uniform Social and Domestic Library was agitated throughout the connection. Bishop Soule read a paper to the Conference on the subject and suggested the appointment of a committee to consider the matter and report at a future day. Benjamin A. Houghton, William Winans, Elias R. Porter, Benjamin M. Drake, and John Lane were appointed the committee, and a succeeding resolution instructed them to inquire into the propriety of petitioning the General Conference to publish a Theological Library also. The committee made their report, but the journal does not give us any light on the subject.

Sundry donations for the most needy of our preachers were sent to us from "the sisters at Natchez and elsewhere," which were placed in the hands of the presiding elders for distribution. The Secretary was instructed to make suitable acknowledgments. We were authorized to draw on the Book Concern for five hundred dollars and on the Chartered Fund for forty dollars.

We could not at once give up our old plan of sitting with closed doors during the examination of character, and a resolution passed to that effect

at this Conference. A motion was afterwards made to permit the preachers on trial to be present as spectators during the examination of character, but it was lost and they had to pass their time out of doors as best they could. We do not do things that way any more, but let all be present who wish during our examinations, except in special cases where propriety dictates otherwise.

The Conference resolved to raise five thousand dollars missionary money during the incoming year, and appointed the presiding elders to make the assessment to each circuit and station according to the supposed ability to pay.

The subject of forming a Conference in Western Louisiana was agitated in open Conference for the first time, but by proposing to take a portion from Arkansas and Texas to make it large enough the project was defeated for the present.

At this date our married itinerants suffered greatly in the way of home comforts and domestic enjoyments for the want of parsonages, there being but few in the Conference and those of inferior quality. It was affecting to any generous heart to see what our true-hearted itinerants had to endure at this point in order to serve the Church in those places where it was thought their services were most needed. Most of our elder brethren had provided homes for their families from necessity, but we now had a class of rising young men in the Conference who were determined to arrest what they called "a local itinerancy," and who persisted in moving their families, at great disadvantage, to any part of the Conference where they might be appointed

to labor. Frequently they could not get a house to live in, and were often much troubled in securing board for their families. This was very humiliating to men who, from a settled conviction of duty, had consecrated their lives to the work of the ministry. But the era of parsonages had not yet come, and such devoted men as David M. Wiggins, Andrew T. M. Fly, John N. Hamill, Richmond Randle, and many others went drifting through the Conference from year to year like houseless and homeless wanderers. Only one thing could have kept such honorable, high-toned men, with their wives and children, in such humiliating and dependent circumstances, and that was a well-settled conviction of duty to God and the souls of men. But it was more the fault of circumstances than the fault of the people that we were so tardy in obtaining parsonages. Except in the town and city stations our pastoral charges were so often remodeled and divided that it was next to impossible to fix on a central place for a parsonage. In some instances where they were provided by the liberality of our people, by a change in the boundaries of the circuit they have been left on the outskirts and in some instances out of the limits of the circuit by which they were built. This policy is wrong, except where it cannot be avoided without manifest injury to the spiritual interests of the circuit. We have persistently kept the parsonage at Fayette, which was the first one in our Conference, in the center of a circuit for forty years, and it has been a comfort and convenience to many of our worthy itinerants and their families.

While on the subject of parsonages we must be

permitted to enter our caveat against the wasteful policy of some of our preachers and their families in the way of neglecting and even abusing our parsonage property. Some of our ministers and their good wives are persons of fine taste and industrious habits, and when they enter a new parsonage home the first thing is to put everything in good order. The furniture is tastefully arranged, the flowering shrubs are pruned and vacant places filled up, the garden is repaired and put into cultivation, fruit trees are planted, fences and gates repaired, the whitewash brush is used, and presently everything looks like somebody lived there in Christian style. When their term of service expires they leave the house and premises in good condition and much improved. But next come a preacher and family of a different style altogether. We do not wish to say they are either reproachfully careless or lazy, but somehow the horse and cow get into the doorway and destroy all the flowering shrubs, creepers, and young fruit trees, the chickens and pigs destroy the garden, the gates are unhinged and the palings knocked off, and one after another they find their way to the stove until there are none left to repair the breaches, and at the end of his pastorate everything about the parsonage is in a state of dilapidation. A Methodist preacher ought to be a better economist and exhibit a better example of frugality and industry.

Wednesday afternoon, December 6, was set apart for a discussion of the interests of Centenary College, at Brandon Springs. We were increasingly convinced that the location was unfortunate,

but saw nothing in prospect better than to **persist** in keeping it up where it was. Under President Thornton and his able professors the college was making first-class scholars, but the **patronage** was not extensive enough. People complained that it was difficult of access, and the additional inland freight on provisions made boarding too high. A resolution passed by a small majority requiring each preacher who voted for it to use his best exertions to collect an average of fifty cents from each white member in his charge the coming year for the benefit of the college, and President Thornton was requested to take collections for the same purpose in any part of the country he might be able to visit.

During the past year Hon. Beverly R. Grayson, of Yazoo County, one of the Trustees of the college, had died, and Samuel W. Spear was elected to fill the vacancy. Mr. Grayson was a nobleman by nature, education, and grace. He entered the Church at Washington, Miss., during the chivalrous days of Methodism in that old territorial town, and ever after remained a worthy and exemplary member until he entered into rest. It adds no little to the prestige of the Church to be able to point to such men as Hon. Beverly R. Grayson as humble, consistent, and devoted members of her communion through a long life. He was a wise counselor and liberal supporter of the Church in all her institutions.

Our academies at Woodville, Washington, and Sharon were all duly considered and assistance given to each in the way of filling vacancies in the Boards of Trustees, appointing visiting com-

mittees, etc. To know that all these seminaries of learning under our patronage did good in their day and contributed largely to the educational interests of the Church and country is gratifying.

A resolution was adopted at this Conference requesting each preacher to write a short memoir of his own life to be transcribed in a book kept for that purpose, which was to be the property of the Conference, and to be kept with the journal by the Secretary, so that when any of our preachers died the committee on memoirs could readily get such dates and facts as would furnish a starting point for a suitable memoir for the General Minutes. We know by experience that this committee is often unable to ascertain the time and place of a deceased brother's birth, or of his conversion and other interesting facts connected with his early Christian experience. The consequence is, we have in many instances the most meager and unsatisfactory memoirs of some of our most holy, talented, and useful ministers. No part of our Church history is read with more interest, edification, comfort, and encouragement than our short sketches of the birth, conversion, holy and useful lives, and triumphant deaths of our deceased brethren. These autobiographical sketches may be very concise and yet embrace all the leading dates and facts that the memoirists need. We have one in each of our ministerial Bibles which does not cover one page of a fly leaf. Few of our preachers have attended to this request.

At the two Conferences immediately preceding this "serious complaints" were made against Enoch Whatley, a deacon of one year; but as he was not

present at either Conference, his case was referred to the presiding elder in whose district he might be found for adjudication according to law in such cases, and he was left without an appointment. It would seem from some now unknown cause that the presiding elders took no action in his case, and for the third time it came before the Annual Conference. Mr. Whatley was able to give such explanations and adduce such testimony as released him from all intentional criminality, and his character passed and he was located at his own request. Our recollection is that he had committed some youthful indiscretions inconsistent with ministerial sobriety and dignity, which rendered him unpopular. \

Cotman Methvin, who located at our last Conference and who lived in the bounds of the Monroe District, had fallen under various accusations from three accusers, his presiding elder, David M. Wiggins, being the principal. Mr. Wiggins had him arraigned and tried according to law, as he understood it, and deposed from the ministry. Mr. Methvin appealed to the Annual Conference, and after a full and fair investigation of the case—Mr. Methvin being permitted to state his case, which he did with his usual modesty and diffidence—the Conference reversed the decision of the court below and restored him to his ministerial standing, and a future motion to reconsider his case was lost. He was remarkable for his humility, modesty, and diffidence, and his whole study seemed to be to feel right and do right in all things. He has since gone to his eternal rest.

John H. Davidson, who had traveled Point Cou-

pee Circuit the past year, had some complaints alleged against him by a prominent member of the Church in Baton Rouge. Mr. Davidson was sick and not able to attend Conference. It is a well-admitted principle in civil jurisprudence that "every man must be esteemed as innocent until he is proven to be guilty," but this principle was ignored in Mr. Davidson's case. If he had intentionally shirked an investigation, his guilt might have been presumed; but this was not the case, for it was in evidence before the Conference that he was down with a sudden attack of illness. We had in those days two or three brethren who were always inclined to bear hard on an accused brother; hence the resolutions that were hastily offered in the pending case:

Resolved, That J. H. Davidson be suspended from his ministerial functions for one year, and that his case come up in regular course at the next Conference.

Resolved, That whereas charges of immorality having been preferred against J. H. Davidson, and he being absent, on motion, his case be laid over until the next Annual Conference for trial, and he be left without an appointment.

On motion, these resolutions were laid on the table.

Immediately a resolution was offered and passed by a majority to go forthwith into the trial of John H. Davidson, a special secretary was appointed, and the investigation proceeded in the absence of the accused, who could neither defend himself nor introduce his rebutting testimony. The journal says that in the investigation of the case it appeared that there was some ground for a charge against him

without some further explanation from him; and it being known that he was sick and not able to attend Conference, "and the Conference desiring to give Brother Davidson the opportunity to defend himself," the following resolution, which prevailed, was offered by Benjamin M. Drake and seconded by John N. Hamill:

Resolved, That the trial of Brother Davidson be postponed until the next Annual Conference, and that meanwhile he be suspended from his ministerial functions.

Yes; inflict on a sick and absent brother the severest penalty known in our jurisprudence, except expulsion from the Church, before he is tried and found guilty of anything! Strange procedure, as it stands on the face of the journal! Why not refer the case to his presiding elder for an investigation, according to a special law of the Church, by a committee in the interim of the Annual Conference? We will see that when this case was investigated by the ensuing Annual Conference, with Mr. Davidson present to defend himself and to explain his own course, it did not amount to anything very blameworthy.

At this Conference our delegates to the ever-memorable General Conference of 1844 were elected. On the first ballot William Winans, Benjamin M. Drake, and John Lane were elected, and on the second Green M. Rogers. On the first ballot for reserve delegates Samuel W. Spear was elected by a large majority, and on the third Sewell Campbell was elected.

Our next Conference was appointed to meet in Port Gibson, December 11, 1844.

The presiding elders were continued as last year, except the Jackson District was absorbed and John Lane, who had it in charge, was this year placed in charge of Warren Circuit, and Andrew T. M. Fly succeeded Green M. Rogers on the Sharon District, while Mr. Rogers was appointed Financial Agent of Centenary College.

Some of the circuits were remodeled, their names changed, and new preaching places added, which made divisions into additional charges necessary. Our pastoral charges were gradually supplied with experienced men, with a junior preacher to assist in the work.

In forty-five years our Church had literally come up out of the wilderness until now she was an acknowledged power in the land and stood in the front of all her Protestant sisters. In surveying our present elevated position, in connection with the prosperous new Conferences we had set off, we had great cause to "thank God and take courage."

Our colored missions were becoming more and more popular and productive of good fruit.

To show the embarrassment under which the missionaries among the negroes often labored, we will give one illustrative circumstance. One Sabbath after preaching to one of our large colored congregations we were invited by a wealthy planter to call and dine with him. While at his house he asked us if the Methodist preachers were not generally antislavery men. We answered that in the North we presumed they were, but that we of the South looked upon slavery as a civil institution, the existence and perpetuity of which were recognized by the

Constitution and laws of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the several slave States, and that as ministers of the gospel we did not interfere with the civil institutions of our country, but endeavored to preach the gospel faithfully both to master and slave. "But look," said he, "at your book of Discipline, which you all promise not to mend but to obey. You there ask the question, 'What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?' and then you give a list of five answers, all of which plainly show the antislavery tendencies of your Church." We replied that his quotation from our book of Discipline was correct, that it had been made and kept there by a Northern majority in the General Conference against our wishes and judgment, that that ninth section with its concomitants had greatly hindered us in our honest efforts to Christianize the African race in our midst, and that we never had and never would enforce, nor even try to enforce, the requirements of that ninth section, but ignored it altogether, as our Northern brethren very well knew. He seemed satisfied with our explanation and the ground we had taken, and always thereafter gave us free access to his colored people.

The ever-to-be-deplored controversy on the subject of slavery, in connection with the cases of F. A. Harding and Bishop Andrew, occurred in the General Conference of this year, which was held in the city of New York in May and June. This bitter controversy, with its immediate results, laid the foundation for the final separation of our Church into two independent jurisdictions. The whole Church was convulsed from center to circumference.

The mind of the Church was filled with this unprecedented disaster. To this writer it was the darkest day he had ever seen. But our Northern brethren, because they had it in their power, pushed us to the wall, and left us no alternative but separation or the defeat of our ministry in large portions of the slaveholding States. We were not willing to lose the fruits of our self-sacrifice, labor, and toil among the slaves of the South or their owners, and accepted separation as much the better alternative. We briefly refer to this state of affairs to account for our want of success in adding to our Church membership this year. This unbrotherly and ruinous convulsion exploded in the General Conference in May and June, and from then until the end of the year our Church papers were filled with it, our ministers and members talked of little else, our Churches and Quarterly Conferences debated the subject, and the entire portion of the year usually devoted to protracted meetings and special efforts to save souls was taken up with this humiliating and much-to-be-deplored disaster to our glorious Church. The result was that instead of our usual increase we had a decrease of sixty white members, with an increase of only seven hundred and twelve colored and twelve Indian members. It is a fearful thing to rend the body of Christ, but we feel that the responsibility of this fearful calamity is not on us. We were compelled to judge of our responsibility from what we actually heard and saw around us everywhere. Our Northern brethren were not here to judge of our circumstances. As they were free from African slavery, we had no desire to

trouble them with it, and all we asked was simply to let us alone and permit us to pursue our providential course in preaching the glorious gospel of Christ both to the bond and free. The Southern Methodist preachers were the best friends the negroes ever had. The negroes were the most ignorant and degraded heathens when they were brought here, but generations of them have been brought to see and enjoy "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ," mainly through the instrumentality of Southern Methodist preachers.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1844.

THE Mississippi Conference convened in the ancient territorial town of Port Gibson, Miss., December 11, 1844, this being the first and up to this date (1875) the only Annual Conference ever held in the place. Several years later another was appointed to be held there, but was prevented by yellow fever.

Bishop Edmund Storer Janes was present, and opened the Conference with the usual religious services, to which he added an appropriate address on the importance of the work before us and the spirit and manner in which it should be performed. Bishop Janes was a small man, with a somewhat feminine voice of limited volume, but a man of rare and ready intelligence and great sanctity. He conducted an unusually excited session of our Conference very gracefully and with great precision. We were so well pleased with what we saw of his administration, and moreover being anxious to have one of our bishops domiciliated in the Southwest, that by a unanimous vote we solicited him to fix his family residence in the bounds of our Conference.

Samuel W Spear was elected Secretary and John N. Hamill his Assistant.

Rev. Leroy Swormstedt was present to represent the interests of the Cincinnati branch of the Book Concern, which he always did with great energy and

exactness. He was not the man that we would like to owe anything but love unless we could have the money ready as soon as called for. But the delinquencies of so many of our preachers in paying their book accounts during the great financial pressure, which had not yet ended, made it necessary for him to press his claims with much earnestness.

Rev. Charles B. Tippet was also present as one of the Book Agents at New York to press the claims of the parent Book Concern.

We presume from the number of claims placed in the hands of presiding elders and other special agents for collection that the indebtedness of our preachers was much greater than usual. The stringency of the times had prevented some of the preachers from selling all the books they had ordered; while others, we think, imprudently had used their book money to pay current family expenses in hopes of collecting enough on their salaries to refund, but failed.

Rev. John B. McFerrin was likewise present to look after the interests of our adopted paper, the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, of which he was Editor. We appreciated him highly as our Editor, especially during these trying times of separation. Not only his mature judgment and unshaken firmness but his "moderation was known unto all men."

Sixteen were admitted on trial at this Conference, including two (John C. Johnson and Edward F. Thwing) who had been on trial before but discontinued. Of the sixteen, three were from New Orleans; and of the three, one, Nicholas Brickwedel, was a German. Methodism in its doctrines, disci-

pline, and usages is very favorably adapted to the German mind, and whenever brought fully within its range Germans readily embrace it. They like a feeling religion; they enjoy our social meetings exquisitely; they are entranced with our hearty singing, or rather with such as they soon learn to do themselves, and we believe that when they once learn to "sing with the spirit and with the understanding also" they excel us in this delightful part of social worship. They generally make very stable and reliable Church members.

We established our first German Mission in New Orleans in December, 1842, and up to this Conference it had been under the pastoral care of Rev. Charles Bremar. We were now able to give him as the fruit of his labors Nicholas Brickwedel as his colleague. We had sixty German members at this date.

Elkanah F. Remington, a young man of unusual sprightliness and fluency of speech and who was now eligible in point of time for admission into full connection, was dropped for gross unchristian conduct. George N. Robinson, James R. Patton, Alexander G. Payne, and James H. Muse were discontinued at their own request; thirteen remained on trial; twelve were received into full connection and ordained deacons, seven were ordained elders; Jesse A. Gwice, Alexander S. Parker, Elijah Gentry, and Winfre B. Scott were readmitted; Thomas C. Thornton, Green Y. McNabb, Horace M. Booth, George F. Spence, Edgar A. M. Gray, and Elias R. Porter were located at their own request; John G. Jones was placed on the supernumerary roll, and Samuel

Walker, William Stephenson, Thomas Owens, Peter James, Asbury H. Shanks, and Jesse Lee were superannuated; James A. Shockley had died with the harness on; nine local preachers were elected to deacon's orders, and two to elder's.

Our deceased fellow-laborer, James A. Shockley, was born of religious parents in South Carolina in the latter part of the year 1809. At the early age of ten or twelve years he experienced a change of heart and became an acceptable member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He grew up to mature manhood in the Church and became the head of a family before he fully consented to follow his oft-repeated convictions of duty by entering the ministry. But having moved to Mississippi and feeling it unsafe to disobey the movings of the Holy Spirit any longer, in 1840 he consented to receive license to preach, and was employed by Enoch M. Talley, the presiding elder of the Paulding District, as the colleague of Erastus R. Strickland on the Paulding Circuit. In the latter part of November, 1841, with fourteen others, he was admitted on trial into the Mississippi Conference and continued on Paulding Circuit as preacher in charge. The succeeding year he was alone on Decatur Circuit, and in 1843 he was appointed in charge of Whitesand Circuit, with Benjamin F. Impson as his junior. To use the language of our early memoirists, "he was a man of solid parts." He seemed to have a fine constitution and a well-balanced and improving mind, and above all a deeply pious heart. Though laboring on large circuits, he accomplished his course of study and graduated in due course to deacon's orders with every

prospect of taking a high stand among his brethren as a faithful, talented, and useful minister. In the latter part of August he attended a camp meeting among the people of his first charge, on the Paulding Circuit, where he was taken ill with the disease that eighteen days afterwards terminated his earthly career. During the early part of his sickness such hopes were entertained of his recovery that his family was not brought to him until a few days before his death. During his severe and protracted illness he was patient and resigned, feeling that God was good and what he did was for the best. When convinced that his end was near, he said he was ready to go, adding: "I have lived for this hour. God is here. I'm in glory now. This is heaven. Tell my father and Brother Hamill, my presiding elder, that I die at my post, at the feet of Jesus, in sight of glory." And as he entered the vale of death he said: "My work is done. Amen. Glory to God!" Christian friends around his bed partook of his joy and triumph, several of whom praised God aloud for his final victory. He died September 12, 1844, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, leaving a wife and three children, who remained on the beneficiary list of the Conference as long as they were legal claimants.

As this is about the last time we shall have the privilege of recording our annual dividend from our connectional Book Concern, we will state by way of a last farewell that we were permitted to draw on the Book Concern for one thousand dollars and on the Chartered Fund for forty dollars. This added substantially to our beneficiary fund.

Bishop Janes proceeded early to the examination of ministerial character, and it was resolved to conduct the examination with closed doors. We shall see the propriety of this resolution before we get through with the troubles that came on us at this Conference.

In reviewing the journal of this Conference we find no allusion to the fact that we received a very valuable transfer at this date from the Missouri Conference in the person of Rev. James L. Forsyth, in elder's orders; hence we did not record it at the place where we usually record the names of those transferred to us. Mr. Forsyth at once took a high stand among us as an able, laborious, and useful itinerant minister. He has frequently been brought into requisition to fill the most important town and city stations in the Conference, and has been very acceptable everywhere. He is still among us, enjoying personally a robust old age, but has had much affliction in his family, which has at times interfered with his ministerial labors. It is a pleasure to look on such standard bearers, who in "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night" have borne aloft the banner of the cross without faltering. May he long be continued as a blessing to our Conference!

Centenary College, as located at Brandon Springs, was getting into inextricable difficulties. President Thornton allowed himself to feel that he had been unjustly treated by some of his juniors in the ministry, including other members of the Church, in consequence of which he resigned the presidency of the college, asked and obtained a loca-

tion from the Conference, and temporarily withdrew from the communion of the Church. Six vacancies in the Board of Trustees were reported to the Conference, which were filled by the election of Revs. L. Campbell, William C. Payne, George W. Stewart, John G. Parker, and Thomas B. Adams, and Thomas Mount, layman. David O. Shattuck was appointed President *pro tem.*, and John Powell and Farquhar Mathewson were appointed Traveling Agents.

Our academies all received due attention, and visiting committees composed of ministers were appointed to visit such as needed special attention and report their condition to the next Conference.

Our favorite old Elizabeth Female Academy at Washington, Miss., had nearly run her race of usefulness. Her early patronizing public had disappeared until few were left to do her honor.

A communication from D. George Humphreys, we presume at the time President of the Board of Trustees of the Port Gibson Female Academy, and John Harvey, President of the Academy, was addressed to the Conference through Bishop Janes, proposing to place the academy under the control of the Conference, provided we would appoint one of our educated ministers to a professorship in the academy and take it under our denominational patronage. We consented to the terms, and requested the Bishop to appoint Rev. James McClellenn to a professorship in the academy, which was accordingly done. From this date the academy continued under the patronage and control of the Conference until after the late war, when the real estate was turned over in fee simple to the Mississippi

Conference on the single condition that we keep a school there in perpetuity for the white race.

On the first day of the Conference J. G. Jones, seconded by William H. Watkins, offered the following resolution, which prevailed:

Resolved, That a committee of one be appointed from each presiding elder's district to take into consideration all matters relating to the contemplated division of the Methodist Episcopal Church and report the same to this Conference at an early day.

William H. Watkins, John G. Jones, Lewell Campbell, Barnabas Pipkin, John N. Hamill, Andrew T. M. Fly, David M. Wiggins, and William G. Gould were appointed on that committee, to which David O. Shattuck was afterwards added. Mr. Shattuck was an eminent jurist, and it was thought best to have him on the committee to give legal advice in case of necessity. Pending the preparation of the report of this committee Bishop Janes presented to the Conference the report of the committee of nine, appointed by the late General Conference to consider and report on the declaration of the delegates from the slaveholding States, which report was read by the Secretary. This report, in view of the contemplated separation of the Church, recommended a change in the sixth restrictive rule of the General Conference by adding after the word "children" the words "and to such other purposes as may be determined upon by the votes of two-thirds of the members of the General Conference."

The Bishops were respectfully requested to lay the report of the committee of nine before each An-

nual Conference at its first session after the General Conference of 1844, to obtain their concurrence or nonconcurrence to the proposed change of the sixth restrictive rule. Our Conference voted eighty-one for concurrence and none against it.

In the meantime Bishop Janes presented a resolution from the Holston Conference requesting our concurrence. What the purport of this resolution was the journal does not state, and at this distance of time the writer does not very distinctly recollect it, but it was something in reference to an impracticable compromise. It was referred to the Committee on Separation, which reported unfavorably to the Holston resolution. Benjamin A. Houghton, by his own request, was excused from voting, after which seventy-three voted for nonconcurrence and none for concurrence.

The Committee on the Plan of Separation deliberated on their report about six days before they presented it to the Conference, such was their anxiety to have every sentence and word in due form and all imbued with the pacific spirit of our holy Christianity. The report was accepted and thoroughly scrutinized item by item and, after a few verbal amendments, was unanimously adopted.

The Northern majority in the General Conference left us no alternative but separation, and we acquiesced in a plan of separation which we determined to carry out in good faith. As soon as the report on separation was adopted, on the motion of Benjamin M. Drake the Conference "joined in humble and fervent prayer to Almighty God that the contemplated division of the Methodist Epis-

copal Church might not prove injurious to the Church either North or South, and that there might not be any alienation of feeling among Methodists North or South."

Our venerable brethren, John Lane and William Winans, each led in prayer. We were not willing to take any step in this important matter that we could not consistently invoke the blessing of God upon.

To leave the way open for reunion at any subsequent period, the following resolution was very cordially passed:

Resolved, That we recommend to the Convention to be held at Louisville, Ky., in May next, to keep the door open for the reunion of the Methodist Episcopal Church; that so soon as our Northern brethren shall make such proposals officially as we can in honor and conscience accept there may be a reunion of the Church.

Before adjourning for the day the Conference passed the following resolution:

Resolved, That in the election of delegates to the Convention they would be governed by the rule of Discipline fixing the qualifications of delegates to the General Conference.

On the following day we elected our delegates to the Louisville Convention, requiring a majority of the whole to elect any one. William Winans, John Lane, John G. Jones, Samuel W. Spear, Benjamin M. Drake, Green M. Rogers, David O. Shattuck, and Lewell Campbell were elected. The Conference then proceeded to elect four reserve delegates. On the first ballot Thomas Owens, William H. Watkins, and Barnabas Pipkin were elected, and

Benjamin Jones, being the next highest on the list, was on motion declared elected. Our recollection is that John Lane did not attend the Convention on account of severe family affliction, and William H. Watkins attended as his alternate. David O. Shattuck, being President *ad interim* of Centenary College, did not go, nor did any alternate supply his place.

Our hearts were burdened; our minds were filled with the distracted and unprecedented condition of our beloved Church. We were determined to take every step prayerfully and cautiously. We deprecated the thought of hasty action; we were determined not to widen the breach or close the door against reunion on honorable Christian principles. But in adopting the report of our Committee on the Plan of Separation we declared that "we are fully convinced that justice to ourselves, as well as compassion for the slaves, demands an unqualified disapproval of the action of the late General Conference" in the cases of Rev. F. A. Harding and Bishop Andrew, and that such action was "not only without law or usage, but in direct contravention of all law," and in direct defiance of a resolution adopted by the General Conference of 1840, declaring that the mere ownership of slaves, where emancipation is impracticable, "constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office known in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

We further reiterated in our report the principle on which the Mississippi Conference had always acted on the subject of slavery without a single ex-

ception: that "with the abstract subject of slavery we have nothing to do, nor do we regard it as a subject on which the Church has a right to legislate." We further stated a fact in our report which it appears our Northern brethren could not appreciate or even see, which was, "that a tame submission on our part to the action of the late General Conference of the cases of Rev. F. A. Harding and Bishop Andrew would prevent our future access to the slaves, and expose us to suspicions destructive to our general usefulness."

In view of all the responsibilities involved in our anomalous condition, which was not of our seeking, and from an earnest desire not to take a wrong step in any direction, after we had completed all our preliminary movements in reference to the Louisville Convention we solemnly passed the following resolution:

Resolved, That the first Friday in May, next, be set apart as a day of special fasting and prayer for the superintendence and direction of Divine Providence with regard to our Church difficulties, that the delegates may act so as to bring the greatest glory to God and the most good to his Church.

Rev. John B. McFerrin, Editor and Publisher, at Nashville, of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, addressed the Conference on the encouraging financial condition of the paper. The Conference was well pleased with his financial and editorial management of our adopted organ, and passed the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Mississippi Annual Conference cordially approve the mild and Christian manner in which the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* has been conducted in

reference to the difficulties in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that the Editor is respectfully requested to continue the same conciliatory course.

On motion of William Winans, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Conference that should any one of its members be suspended during the interim of Conference he shall not have a vote in the Conference until his trial takes place and he be acquitted.

This Conference was in one feature a very unpleasant and humiliating Conference. There were complaints alleged against ten of our preachers. It is true that most of them were of small importance, but still they were brought forward in due form as complaints and had to undergo a regular investigation. If Bishop Janes judged the character of our Conference from what he witnessed on this occasion, he doubtless thought we were somewhat disorderly; and if the good people of Port Gibson passed sentence on our general character from what they saw and heard of us at this time, it was perhaps that we were very hypercritical and captious toward each other. During our fifty years' connection with the Mississippi Conference we have attended two or three sessions that for a few days were very humiliating to our feelings, and this was one of them.

Pleasant B. Baily, who had been in charge of Madison Circuit the previous year, was reported by his presiding elder to have had a fight with a Dr. Collins. A difference of opinion arose between them about the correctness of an account which Dr. Col-

lins presented to Mr. Baily for payment, and in a moment of excitement Mr. Baily said to the Doctor: "If you had sworn to your account, you would have sworn to a lie." For this remark Dr. Collins forthwith attempted to chastise Mr. Baily, when Mr. Baily turned on him and soon got him under. As Mr. Baily rose up, somewhat exultant at his sudden victory, he said to the Doctor: "You're mistaken in your man, sir; I'm a hoss!" Mr. Baily very respectfully said to the Conference that he could not feel that he did wrong in simply defending himself from the unexpected and rude attack of Dr. Collins, but that he felt that he was wrong in saying to Dr. Collins that if he had sworn to his account he would have sworn to a lie, and in saying after the fight, in a spirit of exultation: "You're mistaken in your man, sir; I'm a hoss!" He confessed to having been betrayed for the moment into a bad temper, and into the use of language very unbecoming a minister of the gospel. In view of his penitence, his character was passed.

Thomas Price, who had been in charge of Covington Circuit, was complained of for something not now recollected through Barnabas Pipkin, his presiding elder. A committee consisting of John Lane, William H. Watkins, Preston Cooper, Richmond Randle, and John Powell was appointed to investigate the case. They reported next day that they found nothing requiring censure in Mr. Price, and his character passed. He was not, however, elected to elder's orders at the time his character passed because he had not yet been examined on the course of study. In two or three days he underwent a

satisfactory examination and was elected and ordained.

Several of the undergraduates were not in the first instance elected to deacon's and elder's orders because their examination on the course of study was not fully satisfactory, but their cases were afterwards reconsidered and most of them were elected to orders, some with and some without an admonitory vote of censure for past delinquencies in their studies. Some of our most talented and promising young preachers, from a laudable desire to excel in their pulpit labors, had turned their attention mainly to sermonizing to the neglect of the prescribed course of study; hence their imperfect knowledge of the regular course of study. The Conference gave them to understand that in view of their future usefulness as ministers they must compass the official course of study, notwithstanding their present superior abilities in the pulpit. In this the Conference was right, and we now number among our most talented ministers some whose early advancement was arrested because of their unwillingness to confine themselves to the required course of study.

John H. Davidson, who was suspended at our last Conference while absent on a bed of sickness, without a trial or having been found guilty of anything, had his case called up at this Conference as unfinished business and referred to a committee. After a sifting investigation the committee found nothing blameworthy against him except some little indiscretions, the result of his inexperience. He was most affectionately admonished by Bishop Janes

to be more guarded hereafter, which he received in an excellent spirit, manifested by his flowing tears and perfect submission to the advice of the Bishop. We knew Mr. Davidson from his early childhood. He was brought up in a community and in circumstances very unfavorable to early piety or even any very definite knowledge of the nature and claims of religion. His widowed mother, however, became a worthy member of our Church, and about the time he attained the age of majority, after his youth had been beclouded with sin, he was awakened and converted and was soon after licensed to preach and admitted on trial into the Conference, with but little knowledge of Methodism or what constituted the proprieties of ministerial life. Of course he needed the care and counsel and even forbearance of his elder brethren while maturing into an experienced minister of Jesus Christ. There is such a difference in the early habits of men and their opportunities for receiving correct information in their youth that the admonition of the apostle Jude has as much applicability now as it ever had: "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." O with what patient love and care and paternal faithfulness we should train up the dear young men that the great and supreme Head of the Church graciously gives us to be our colaborers in the ministry!

George F. Spence had fallen into some trouble, and his case was referred to a committee consisting of Benjamin Jones, William F. Brown, and

Henry J. Harris. The committee reported some unministerial improprieties, for which the Conference voted him an admonition, which was most appropriately administered by the Bishop.

But the most perplexing and protracted case we had before the Conference was that of Levi Pearce as the representative of his brother, Collins Pearce, and A. B. Bridges against Bennett R. Truly. We infer from the history of the case that the parties, during what was known as "the flush times of Mississippi," had fallen into the spirit of the times and had very freely engaged in the purchase and sale of both real and personal estate. The result was they all became involved, and the next alternative was, according to the prevailing morals of Mississippi at the time, to cover their property from their creditors until they had time to work out and pay their debts. The plan worked too slow and seemed to be too unsafe for some of the parties interested in this case. We infer from the various documents read and the oral testimony given that the case had been before the courts of the country and a board of Church arbitrators and had been decided adversely to the plaintiffs. The case was referred to a committee of three, consisting of David O. Shattuck, Hayden Leavel, and Samuel W. Spear, to be put in due form for trial. The committee made their report, which, on motion, was accepted; but a motion to adopt it was lost, which made it necessary to take up the case *de novo*. Mr. Pearce, in behalf of his brother, Collins Pearce, and A. B. Bridges, charged Mr. Truly with lying and fraud, each professedly supported by a leading specifica-

tion. Mr. Pearce requested the services of Benjamin M. Drake to assist him in the prosecution, and Mr. Truly those of David O. Shattuck to assist him in his defense. A large amount of testimony, both documentary and oral, was introduced by the parties and an unusual number of speeches allowed on both sides until finally the special pleadings were arrested by order of the Conference. The case was continued through three sittings of the Conference, and seemed to degenerate between some of the speakers more into a contest for championship than a single desire to do justice to an accused brother who was being tried for his ministerial life. A number of unseemly phrases were introduced, such as "after him with a sharp stick," etc., more befitting a squabble between a brace of undeveloped lawyers in a magistrate's court than a Conference of grave divines sitting in judgment on the case of an accused brother. This writer was deeply mortified at what seemed mere rivalry between some of the chief speakers at the expense of the feelings of the accused. The bearing of Mr. Truly throughout the protracted trial was that of a Christian gentleman and dignified minister of the gospel. The result of the whole investigation was that the specifications were not sustained, and of course the charges were not. A motion was then made to "highly disapprove of the conduct of B. R. Truly as set forth in the charges," etc.; but it was promptly voted down, and a motion to pass his character was largely sustained.

We are not yet done with the humiliating troubles that came on us at this Conference. The truth

of history requires us to say a few words about the misfortunes of an amiable young minister by the name of Thomas B. Craighead, who finally became a confirmed lunatic. Mr. Craighead belonged to a wealthy, influential Tennessee family of high social position, in which State he was brought up. Being fond of military affairs, he connected himself with the United States Army, and was in the Florida War, where he was wounded in the heat of battle with the Seminole Indians. After a service of less than a year he dissolved his connection with the army and returned home. Having embraced religion and believing it his duty to preach the gospel as an itinerant Methodist preacher, in the latter part of 1839 he was received on trial into the Tennessee Conference, where he traveled three years, graduating in due course to deacon's orders. In the meantime his father having settled in Southern Louisiana, in order to be near him, he obtained a transfer to our Conference. In 1843 he was stationed in Baton Rouge, and at the ensuing Conference was elected and ordained elder. The past year he was stationed in Franklin and Newtown, in Southern Louisiana. He was a young man of popular manners and of acceptable preaching abilities, but was no doubt at this time falling into that dreamy, erratic state of mind which terminated in a few years in confirmed, lifelong lunacy. On this ground alone can we account for some of his eccentricities connected with his conduct which led to his suspension from the ministry. At this Conference he was charged by William G. Gould, his pre-

siding elder, with immorality. In the first specification he was accused of attempting improper familiarities with a married lady, and in the second he was accused of writing a challenge to her husband. His case was referred to a committee consisting of William H. Watkins, Robert D. Smith, and John G. Jones, who reported the necessity of an investigation. Mr. Craighead was remarkably fond of well-kept babies, and often indulged this fondness by toying with and kissing them, and this innocent practice seemed to be the entering wedge to his downfall. That he was even now to a considerable extent mentally deranged, the testimony in the case given by himself and other witnesses plainly shows. He made a visit one day to a lady of his charge in Franklin and found her nursing a sweet babe. He felt a sudden impulse to kiss the child; and setting his hat on the Bible that lay on the center table (as an evidence, he said, that his motive was pure), he stooped to kiss the babe and in doing so incautiously laid one hand on the lady's breast. Here the matter ended so far as kissing the baby was concerned. The lady's husband was master of a steamboat, and when he came home she related the circumstance to him, whereupon he fell into a great rage and, without giving Mr. Craighead the least warning, fell on him with a whip on the street. Mr. Craighead did not at first recognize him, but supposed he was a crazy man, and received several severe licks before he undertook to defend himself. Looking him in the face and seeing he was not crazy, he said he "called on the name of the Lord and knocked him down." Mr. Craighead's

friends out of the Church were wrought up to the highest pitch of indignation, and insisted that he would be justifiable in killing his assailant or at least in challenging him to mortal combat. His chivalry as a soldier was appealed to; and, the whole affair being crowded into twenty-four hours, Mr. Craighead, with his mind already in a partial state of alienation, was prevailed on to write a challenge. But his assailant fled to his boat, raised steam, and left port. Some of Mr. Craighead's friends persuaded him to get out a warrant and have him arrested and brought back, which was done; but other friends more prudent contrived to keep Mr. Craighead from knowing of his return, and he left again without Mr. Craighead seeing him, and here hostilities ended. David O. Shattuck made an able defense of Mr. Craighead, mainly on the ground that he had acquired the tone and habits of a soldier while in the army and only acted in accordance therewith in this case. The Conference, by vote, disapproved of the ground Mr. Shattuck took in the defense, and concluded that the purity of the ministry required Mr. Craighead's suspension, and voted accordingly. During the trial Mr. Craighead conducted himself with the utmost propriety, though he seemed greatly discouraged, and said he did not think himself adapted to the itinerant ministry and thought he never would try it again. His humble and quiet submission to his fate only made us feel the greater sympathy for him. In a few years he became an inmate of the Lunatic Asylum of Tennessee, where we presume he spent the last twenty-five years of his life, having but lately died.

We never think of the noble young man and his sad fate without sorrowful emotions.

After appointing visiting committees for Centenary College and Sharon Female College, passing our usual votes of thanks for the elegant and bountiful hospitality which we had enjoyed among the citizens of Port Gibson, and to the pastor and members of the Presbyterian Church for the use of their house of worship to hold our sessions in, and fixing on New Orleans for our next annual meeting, the appointments were announced and we adjourned after a session of ten days, some days having as many as three sittings.

We have nothing very special to record in regard to the appointments this year. The same men were continued in charge of districts. The only noticeable change is that the name of Paulding District was changed to Pearl River and David M. Wiggins was moved from Monroe District to Pearl River and John N. Hamill from Pearl River (formerly Paulding) to Monroe.

Our town and city stations were generally supplied with suitable pastors, and the same may be said of most of the circuits. Since our pioneer service in newly settled regions had terminated we had been gradually increasing the number of experienced and efficient ministers until almost every pastoral charge was supplied with a suitable pastor.

The Church papers this year teemed with long articles for and against the Plan of Separation, but our portion of the Church was fast settling down in quiet submission to a fate which we had not provoked and which we did not deserve. We had been

simply standing in our providential lot, and were earnestly engaged in preaching the gospel both to the "free and bond," and were often filled with joy to witness the humanizing effect of our labors both upon master and slave.

Slaveholders were generally represented abroad as cruel to their slaves, but with few exceptions this representation was false and slanderous, and it is surprising that enlightened and honest minds could not see that it was. Apart from the claims of humanity and religion, every slave owner was bound by self-interest to provide well for his negroes and to protect them from all disabling injuries. What constituted their only value? Nothing but their ability to work and to continue to work to reasonable old age; and in order to make them efficient laborers they had to be kept in as good health as possible, and in order to this they had to be well fed, well clothed, well housed, well rested, and well doctored and nursed in sickness. Under the humanizing influences of our holy Christianity the owners of slaves were becoming more and more attentive to all these points in the treatment of their slaves. But we only refer to the improved condition of both master and slave as a part of our Conference history, for we were chiefly instrumental in bringing about these favorable changes.

We have said we quietly submitted to the inevitable separation of the Church, and so we did. But our labors were continued as formerly, and the Head of the Church crowned our labors with our usual success. We had this year an increase of one thousand three hundred and forty white, one

thousand five hundred and three colored, and one Indian member. It will be remembered that most of our Indian members had gone to the West, including nearly all the native preachers. In our German Mission in New Orleans we had a net increase this year of thirty members, making a total of ninety at the end of the year.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1845.

THE Mississippi Annual Conference which closed the business of 1845 and planned that for 1846 met in New Orleans December 10, 1845. The session was held in the lecture room of Poydras Street Church. Nearly sixty preachers who were members were present at the opening session, besides applicants for admission, probationers, and visiting brethren.

Bishop Soule being delayed several days, William Winans was elected President, and Dr. Hayden Leavel Secretary. Dr. Leavel, for a beginner, made us an excellent Secretary. William Winans ought to have been a bishop, for whenever he presided he did things in a very bishop-like way. The Conference was opened with Scripture-reading, singing, and prayer by Mr. Winans. There is something peculiar in the service of song at the opening of an Annual Conference on account of the absence of female voices and the full, clear, loud voices of the preachers. They usually sing the opening hymn, commencing "And are we yet alive?" with an unction and tenderness witnessed nowhere else.

After fixing the hours of meeting and adjournment and appointing the requisite standing and special committees, Rev. Leroy Swormstedt, one of

the Book Agents from Cincinnati, was introduced and addressed the Conference on the subject of his agency. He pressed the collection of his claims with great earnestness. Perhaps he thought this would be his last opportunity in the Mississippi Conference, as our final separation from the Northern department of our Church was soon to be completed.

The interests of the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, published at Nashville, under the patronage of five or six Annual Conferences in the Southwest, had assumed such proportions under the judicious management and editorship of J. B. McFerrin that an Associate Editor became necessary, and Rev. Moses M. Henkle had been elected as his associate in the editorial department. Mr. Henkle was introduced to the Conference and very efficiently represented the interests of our adopted paper.

Rev. Charles B. Tippet, one of the Book Agents from New York, was also present, and after addressing the Conference on the subject of his agency pressed the collection of his claims with great pertinacity.

Under the first question thirteen were admitted on trial, several of whom are yet ministers of mark in the several Conferences to which they now belong, especially Reynolds Trippett and James L. Wright, of the Louisiana Conference, and Daniel Morse, of the East Texas Conference. Ever since New Orleans was thoroughly stirred by the session of an Annual Conference it had been quite productive of young preachers. Three of the thirteen admitted at this Conference were from the city. The

General Minutes give us but twelve admissions at this Conference, having overlooked the name of Daniel S. Watkins, found in the journal, and also as junior preacher on Natchitoches Circuit.

We believe it our best policy as often as practicable to hold our Annual Conferences in new places, even at some personal expense and inconvenience. Some among our sister denominations will have it that our preachers are less talented than theirs because they have not passed through what is technically called a theological seminary, and that our members are less educated and refined than those of their communion; and nothing is better adapted to remove this prejudice, founded on ignorance, than the presence for a week of an Annual Conference, with its bishop and array of the most talented and powerful preachers in the land, and all its other appendages of ordinations, administration of ordinances, singing, praying, and public and private intercourse of the preachers with the people. We have in many instances known the current of public opinion greatly purified from ill-founded prejudices and turned in favor of our Church by a well-conducted Annual Conference.

William M. Haskell and Norman McInnis were discontinued. Mr. Haskell literally ran away from the country about the first of May without stopping to bid his friends farewell. He passed through Louisville while the Convention was in session. We knew nothing against him except his preference for the Northern wing of the Church. Nineteen were continued on trial, including De Witt C. Johnson, who came with a recommendation from Dr. E. W. Schon

as a probationer of one year's standing in the Ohio Conference, and in that standing was admitted among us; ten were received into full connection, and eleven traveling deacons were ordained and nine elders. Byron Benton and William H. Turnley, formerly of our Conference, Humphrey Williamson, late of the Alabama Conference, and Isaac Easterly, formerly of the Tennessee Conference, were readmitted; S. W. D. Chase, late of the Illinois Conference, was received in elder's orders by transfer upon the certificate of Bishop Thomas A. Morris; and Charles P. Clark was transferred from the Troy Conference in view of establishing a mission among the French population of New Orleans and Southwestern Louisiana, he having learned the French language in reference to superintending the mission. We also received by transfer from the Alabama Conference Henry P. Young for our German Mission in New Orleans, but he was, without receiving an appointment in our Conference, retransferred to the Texas Conference and appointed to a German Mission in Galveston; James H. Merrill, Benjamin C. Steagall, Elijah Gentry, Joel Sanders, Richard Overby, Winfre B. Scott, Asbury H. Shanks, Thomas B. Craighead, and James H. Stokes were located at their own request; William C. Payne, James Watson, Samuel Walker, Jesse Lee, William Stephenson, Thomas Owens, Peter James, and William G. Gould were given a superannuated relation; Henry H. Shropshire was expelled; and Robert D. Smith had died. Thirteen local preachers were elected to deacon's and three to elder's orders.

After what we have heretofore in occasional

sketches written about that "Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile," Rev. Robert D Smith (whose death we are now called upon to record), he is no stranger to our readers. We have seldom known his equal in his entire devotion to the work of the ministry and his untiring attention to every Christian and ministerial duty. He was as emphatically a man of one Book (the Bible) and one work as we ever knew. During the eighteen years of his connection with our Conference he was fully effective, and was engaged in every variety of pastoral work. At the outset, as licentiate in the employment of the presiding elder and probationer in the Conference, he traveled on circuits nearly two years; after that he was two years and a half a missionary in the Choctaw Nation until their removal to the West; then he was stationed a year each in Montgomery and Mobile, Ala.; then successively in Vicksburg, New Orleans, and Natchez; after this he spent several years on circuits, two as President of the Elizabeth Female Academy, and two as presiding elder of the Vicksburg District. Our colored missions were growing in importance and popularity, and about 1842 several wealthy planters in the vicinity of Milliken's Bend, in Madison Parish, La., became anxious to have regular ministerial services among their numerous colored people. Mr. Smith, who had married Miss Ann Mariah McClure in Vicksburg on the 11th of November, 1833, and who now had his home there, was selected for this important missionary field, as it was within twenty-five miles of his place of residence, so that he was not under the necessity of taking his family to the Swamp. He

seemed to think himself highly honored, after spending so many years in our city stations and about our seminaries of learning (for he was one year at Centenary after leaving Elizabeth Academy), to be placed on a new colored mission, where he spent about two years and a half, happily and successfully engaged, immediately preceding his death. There were some peculiarities about Mr. Smith, but they were all on the right side. Almost regardless of company or other engagements, his hours for private devotion must be observed. After reading extensively works of theology, history, and biography, in his latter years he almost ceased to read any book except the Bible. This holy Book he read slowly, prayerfully, and thoughtfully, often pausing over a sentence to meditate on it and drink in its full meaning. Personal holiness was his constant pursuit: for this he read and sang and prayed, and about this and its necessary concomitants he mostly conversed. He seemed resolved to become as holy as God would have him to be in this world. But notwithstanding his entire consecration to God and his ministerial work, there was nothing ascetic, austere, or repulsive about him. He was refined, mild, and soft in his manners. Indeed, how could it be otherwise with a heart so richly and constantly imbued with the love of God and man? In person Mr. Smith was rather tall and spare, light-complexion, with an innocent and benevolent expression of countenance, and would have been taken by all good judges as a man of superior intellect. He was never boisterous in preaching, but very earnest and fluent. His sermons were more preceptive and hortatory than log-

ical. He chose rather to follow the leadings of the Spirit in preaching than to confine himself to any previously conceived plan of his own. He was laboring with great acceptability and usefulness both to the white and colored people of his mission until he was attacked with the disease that terminated his connection with earth, on the 16th of May, 1845. As we have remarked in the preceding chapter, Rev. John Lane was prevented from attending the Louisville Convention, to which he had been elected, by severe family affliction; and this detention enabled him to attend our dear Brother Smith in his last hours. Mr. Lane asked him what the state of his mind was. To this he replied: "Very good; I am happy and feel like praising God every moment." He then asked him if he had anything he wished to communicate to his brethren of the Mississippi Conference. To this he replied, emphatically: "I have. Tell them to live holy." He retained the exercise of his mental faculties to the last, and only a few minutes before he ceased to breathe he was asked if his way was still clear. To this he replied: "Perfectly so, perfectly so; Christ died for sinners." He said no more. The silver cord was now loosened, and his purified and happy spirit returned to God who gave it.

Our educational interests needed and claimed special attention at this Conference, especially our college. Even the most sanguine among us were now convinced that a serious error had been committed in locating our Centenary College at Brandon Springs, and we despaired of its ever coming up to our wants and anticipations in that secluded and

out-of-the-way location. We were anxiously looking over our Conference territory for a better location when our attention was called to the Louisiana College, located in Jackson, East Feliciana Parish, La. It had not succeeded very well as a State institution, and it was believed by those who wished to see it flourish that if it were turned over to us, with our known energy and large patronage, we could in a few years make a successful college of it. Interested parties, consisting of the Board of Trustees and, we believe, also the Legislature of the State, were consulted; and after a free and full discussion of the subject in all its bearings, it was agreed to turn the property over to a Board of Trustees appointed by the Mississippi Conference upon such conditions as we felt able to comply with. This was the state of affairs when this Conference met, and on the second day of the session we appointed a committee on education to take the whole matter in relation to changing the location of Centenary College into consideration and report to the Conference. The committee consisted of Samuel W. Spear, William R. Nicholson, James Walton, James McClennen, and William H. Watkins, to which David O. Shattuck was afterwards added. After long consultation and deliberation the committee reported in favor of changing the location of Centenary College from Rankin County, Miss., to Jackson, La., and recommended the immediate election of a Board of Trustees to receive and hold the property of the Louisiana College in behalf of the Mississippi Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as soon as it could be legally

placed in their hands. We adopted the report of the committee and elected as our first Board of Trustees Hon. Edward McGehee, Rev. William Winans, D.D., Hon. John McVea, David Thomas, John W. Burruss, Rev. James H. Muse, S. H. Stockett, John S. Lewis, Ira Bowman, Rev. David Pipes, Robert Perry, John Robson, and Joseph Carmina. David O. Shattuck was elected President, and with his Faculty and other movables was soon on the ground and had the college in successful operation. William Winans was appointed Traveling Agent in the interest of the new location, and John Lane to the more ungracious task of settling up the business of the former establishment. As the college enterprise had originated with the Mississippians of our Conference, we consented to see our money and patronage go to a sister State with some reluctance; but the college was so near our Southern boundary, and withal so convenient to the Louisiana part of our Conference, that we waived all opposition and determined to unite our influence and means in building up a first-class Southern college. We appointed the Trustees irrespective of which State they lived in; and as we expected soon to set off Western Louisiana into a separate Conference, we passed a resolution "that each Conference should have equal interest and privileges in Centenary College, now located at Jackson, La." We had beautiful and ample grounds for a campus, with the buildings now known as the east and west wings, and a large frame building which answered for a chapel and the preparatory school department, and our institution at once took the form of a regular

college of high order with all the departments in regular and successful operation; and until it was crushed by the late war it was excelled by no other college in the Southwest. A large center building had been put up, and the college was increasing in popularity and usefulness until the late ruinous war. It has, however, been repaired and revived and started anew on its career of usefulness.

Sharon Female Academy was still in successful operation, and a committee of five members of Conference was appointed to visit it and report its prospects to the next Conference.

Our Female Academy at Vicksburg was not ultimately successful. Like many other promising institutions, it went down under the great financial crash that swept over our country about this time.

The same, to a great extent, may be said of our once promising young seminary at Emory, in Holmes County. Our long-cherished and very useful old Elizabeth Female Academy, at Washington, Miss., was now closing her once prosperous and brilliant career. Her former patrons were mostly dead or moved away and her limited patronage would not justify any further attempt to keep the academy afloat. The property went into the hands of John W Bryan, and the building in which so many of the daughters of our land had obtained a Christian education became the residence of his family. When we call to mind the number of young ladies who were converted there, especially during the presidency of Rev. John C Burruss, it seems to us yet as sacred ground. Some of our most useful female Church members, including the wives of several of

our prominent ministers, were brought into the kingdom of Christ while inmates of the Academic family. One we must mention by way of illustrating how deep and how genuine and lasting was the work of divine grace among the pupils. Mrs. A. L. Clinton, now the aged companion of our oldest patriarch, Rev. Thomas Clinton, and the mother of our late Rev. George H. Clinton, D.D., is a modest and unassuming Christian lady and seems only intent on discharging faithfully the duties of life and then going home to heaven. She has sent us a request not to put her in our book, as she prefers

To be little and unknown;
Loved and prized by God alone.

But really she must excuse us. As an author we claim the right to use what is exactly in our line of business and what we have legitimately obtained. We once heard her in her meek and quiet but melting way tell in a love feast her early experience, and it is too good to be lost as a beautiful and encouraging illustration of how sinners are brought to give themselves wholly to Christ. Away back in the dim past, more than a half century, Miss A. L. Hanna (now Mrs. Clinton) was placed, we think, as the ward of Rev. William Winans, as a pupil in the Elizabeth Female Academy. While there an extensive and deep religious interest took place among the pupils and numbers were hopefully converted. Among others, Miss Hanna was deeply awakened to a sense of her sinfulness, her destitution of the favor of God, and her utter unfitness for heaven. While others looked on her as adorned with innocence of life, she saw and deeply felt that her

unrenewed heart was full of unbelief and sin and rebellion against the holy, just, and good law of God. She spent her leisure moments in reading the Holy Bible and meditating and praying in secret and bewailing, with tears of penitence, her conscious alienation from God and exposure to his wrath as an unforgiven sinner. One evening after nightfall she felt anxious to be entirely alone with God, that she might without restraint pour out her heart in fervent and, if necessary, long-continued supplication to God for the sensible forgiveness of her sins. The only available place of entire seclusion she could call to mind was an old outhouse on the premises which had been abandoned and was falling into decay. Thither she silently directed her steps and, feeling her way in, fell upon her knees and began to pour out the tale of her woes and her wants into the ears of Him who is "full of compassion, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all that call upon him." Her full heart dictated her earnest whisper. God was there "ready to forgive." A bleeding Saviour was presented to the eyes of her faith. There was a momentary pause, attended with a steadfast looking to Jesus, then a confiding trust in him as her present Saviour; then her mourning ceased, her sorrow subsided, her burden of sin was gone, and sweet peace, love, and joy pervaded her newborn soul; that dilapidated old outhouse surrounded and filled with the darkness of night became to her a Bethel, the house of God and the gate of heaven. In January, 1828, she became the wife of Rev. Thomas Clinton, one of our most laborious itinerant preachers, and patiently

and faithfully has she fulfilled the duties of her relation to the ministry. She became the mother of ten children, nine of whom lived to manhood and womanhood. One son became an eminent minister, two daughters the wives of ministers; six of the ten, we have good hope, are now in paradise, and the remaining four, we trust, are safely on the way. If our mother in Israel should live to read this imperfect sketch of her early experience as we reproduce it from memory after the lapse of many years, we ask her to excuse our liberty. We wish her clear and scriptural conversion preserved not only for the benefit of her own descendants but also for the benefit of the Church. We wish the glorious fact constantly kept before the minds of our people that they can be converted and know that they are converted. We have inserted this brief narrative just here as illustrative of many similar conversions that occurred about the same time and as a sort of final farewell to our dear old Elizabeth Female Academy, which for so many years was the nursery of youthful refinement, intelligence, and piety. It is difficult to realize the fact that of all the bright and happy faces we used to meet there fifty years ago only three or four now survive. With many of them we hope to meet in fairer worlds on high.

We had a manuscript presented to our Conference by our old and highly esteemed friend, Hon. Seth Lewis, of Opelousas; but precisely what it was the author does not now recollect, nor has he the means of ascertaining. It was referred for examination to an intelligent committee, whose report was adopted; but if the manuscript was published, it has es-

caped our memory. Judge Lewis was a forcible writer, and many of his fugitive pieces were published in the Church periodicals of the day.

Pleasant B. Baily and Benjamin M. Drake were appointed a committee to write a pastoral address to the Churches under our charge. In due time they presented a very suitable address, which was ordered to be published in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate* and to be read by each preacher in charge to his congregations.

Bishop Soule arrived in time to take the chair on Monday, the 15th. It afforded us great pleasure to enjoy his presence and wise counsels once more. The more than one score of years which he had spent in the general superintendency had brought him to something like maturity in the episcopacy; for a bishop has to improve by experience and practice as well as other ministers.

We are glad to be reminded by an entry in the journal that the Quarterly Conference of Plaquemine Station had relicensed Thomas B. Craighead, who was suspended at our last Conference, to preach, and petitioned our Conference to remove his suspension and restore him to his former standing as a traveling elder, all of which was accordingly done. He afterwards asked for and obtained an honorable location.

There seemed to be a sort of morbid disposition about this date with a few brethren to bring little misunderstandings and trivial complaints against the preachers into Conference instead of settling them by mutual explanations between the parties or privately in the presence and with the advice

of mutual friends. The most of them amounted to nothing in the end, except to irritate feelings and consume our precious time.

A committee of five was appointed to investigate charges that it was said would be preferred against Thomas Price, who had been stationed in Yazoo City the previous year. Some one, we think, outside of the Conference (the journal does not say whom) charged Mr. Price with maladministration of Discipline and improper conduct in a preacher in charge of a circuit, professedly supported by an array of specifications. After consuming much time in taking oral testimony and reading that which came in the form of documentary evidence, and a free and full discussion of the whole subject, the whole array of specifications and charges fell flat, being wholly unsupported by a particle of legal testimony, and the character of Mr. Price passed unanimously. So much for indulging too much human nature against a preacher in charge for a conscientious administration of Discipline.

Farquhar Mathewson, who had been acting the previous year as Agent for Centenary College, had got into some trouble (the journal does not say what); and after deliberating awhile over the matter, the Conference granted him a conditional location with the understanding that the presiding elder of the Alexandria District, in which he had his home, should look into his case officially. He was expelled at the first Louisiana Conference, and in a few years he finished his course on earth.

Daniel Dealey was a good little man, a warm-hearted Methodist, a fluent and zealous preacher,

intent on discharging all his duties and improving his ministerial talents, but rather too impulsive and sensitive. He had been on the Covington Circuit the past year, and some one charged him with maladministration in expelling a member without a legal form of trial and talking uncharitably about a certain individual. After a full investigation of his case both in committee and Conference Mr. Dealey, with evident regret, acknowledged that he had been too hasty in the expulsion of the member referred to and under excited feelings had spoken uncharitably of the other individual, and promised to be more guarded in future. The Conference then passed his character.

John N. Hamill, who had presided over the Monroe District the previous year, was complained of for something by somebody (the journal does not say what or by whom). His case was referred to a committee of three elders, who, after a full investigation of the alleged complaints, reported that they found nothing deserving censure, and his character passed without reproach.

It is humiliating to record these little complaints against some of our preachers, often growing out of mere prejudice or misapprehension on the part of the complainants; but we find reference to them on the journal; and as the writer often served on the investigating committees and still recollects the futile nature of many of those complaints, he deems it due to the memory of his brethren, where they were proven to be clear of anything blameworthy, to record their justification.

We deeply deplored the sudden downfall of Henry

H. Shropshire, who had been in the itinerancy six years. We believe he was a dentist by profession, was a young man of fair education and good preaching abilities, and had labored acceptably and usefully among us. As Bishop George once remarked in reference to a similar case: "There is no safety this side of heaven." Perhaps a more appropriate quotation would be: "Watch and pray always, that ye enter not into temptation." Mr. Shropshire had been incautiously left in circumstances which exposed him to temptation, and he attempted liberties with a young woman. A few hours' reflection overwhelmed him with a sense of his guilty intention, and he confessed his sin and submitted to expulsion as a deserved punishment. He resumed the practice of his profession beyond the limits of our Conference, and we have good hope that his repentance was complete and that he ultimately died in peace. O how sad to think what mischief a minister may do to himself, his brethren, and the Church of God in one unguarded, prayerless moment!

Benjamin A. Houghton had been somewhat prominent in our Conference for twenty years. He was intelligent, refined in his social habits, and was a well-read and sound theologian, though not a demonstrative revivalist. He filled many of our best appointments with acceptability; and being a man of good business talents, he was often called to serve on important committees at our Annual Conferences. He was the only one in our Conference who adhered North on the division of the Church. Why, he seemed unable to explain very satisfactorily. At the previous Conference, when we were about to

recommend the Plan of Separation for adoption by the Louisville Convention, Mr. Houghton talked and wept, and said he could not think of leaving the old Church in which he was converted in Alabama and in whose ministry he had spent the prime of his life in the Mississippi Conference. This talk about leaving the old Church was then, as it is to this day, nothing, to say the least against it, but a false and utterly mistaken view of the subject. We left no Church, but remained in the same old Methodist Episcopal Church as it was originally founded by our fathers in the Southern States and had been perpetuated to the day of our legal separation from the Northern portion of the Church for good and sufficient reasons. This writer is fully assured that he is in the same Church to-day (October 19, 1875) that he joined just fifty-four years ago, and that he has never been out of it a minute since. Mr. Houghton was last year in charge of Yazoo Circuit, but what amount of service he rendered we do not know. His mind was made up to adhere North; and as this implied that he was not loyal to his native South, his services were endured but were not cordially acceptable. He did not come to this Conference, but wrote us a defiant letter, stating that he was no longer of us and would have nothing to do with our new concern, but intended to adhere to the old Church. It is not of any importance for us to show the utter fallacy of his assumed position. We suppose that what he called the old Church was about as old as what he called our new concern, but no older. The Conference simply passed a resolution that his name be entered

on the journal as having adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. He lived retired after this and had but little influence as a minister, but so far as we know he maintained his personal piety. He fell into bad health and died in a few years, we believe, somewhere on our Gulf Coast, whither he had gone in quest of health. Elias R. Porter informed the writer that Mr. Houghton on his death-bed seemed fully assured of his final salvation, but complained that he had to labor so hard for breath that he could not realize his glorious triumph as he desired.

In all our territory we knew of only one layman who was opposed to the division of the Church upon the adopted Plan of Separation; but he soon relinquished his opposition, and died since the war in full fellowship with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

One of the most important subjects that came up for consideration at this Conference was the division of the Conference so as to erect a new Conference in Western Louisiana. Some of our leading men east of the Mississippi River were opposed to the division, as they thought those west of the river would be too few and too weak to make a respectable Conference. The writer took a different view of the subject and, though he intended to remain in Mississippi, was decidedly in favor of making the new Conference as an act of justice to the Western Louisianians. Hitherto that part of our territory, from the days of Elisha W. Bowman in 1806, had been supplied mainly by our young, inexperienced preachers, many of them only in their first and sec-

ond year and not qualified by ordination to administer the ordinances. The consequence was that, though these undergraduates in the Conference did the best they could, it was not to be expected that they could develop all the resources of Methodism and be very successful in elevating the Church to its proper standard.

Another great hindrance to the progress of the Church in Western Louisiana was that as soon as a young preacher began to develop into ministerial influence and usefulness west of the river it was thought that his services were more needed on the first-class circuits and in the town and city stations east of the river; and he was accordingly moved eastward and his place supplied in Louisiana by a probationer. The consequence was, the Western Louisianians were not permitted to keep the choice young men that they occasionally had among them.

Another telling hindrance to Louisiana always had been that the Conference sessions were invariably held east of the river, which, in distance and the time occupied in crossing and recrossing the forty or fifty miles of overflowed swamp, caused the preachers often to lose from one to two months annually away from their fields of labor. We thought all these hindrances to the prosperity and growth of the Church in Louisiana would be removed by erecting the preachers west of the river into an independent and self-sustaining Conference, with the additional advantage that if a good preacher should be transferred to Louisiana he would not be taken away at the end of the first year and sent east of the river. After a free discussion of the

subject and fixing the eastern boundary so as to give Baton Rouge and New Orleans to the Louisiana Conference as the most suitable places at that date to hold their annual sessions, we passed a resolution instructing our delegates to the ensuing General Conference, to meet on the 1st of May, 1846, in Petersburg, Va., to use their best endeavors to obtain the proposed division of our Conference; and so certain were we of success that the work was adjusted in view of it, and we elected Natchez as the place of holding the Mississippi Conference and Opelousas as the place for that of Louisiana.

We obtained a confirmation of the division of the Conference from the General Conference, and we have not been disappointed in the anticipated beneficial results. Louisiana Methodism has developed in every essential interest immensely since then; and had it not been for the accumulating results of our most disastrous war, followed by the worst government ever known among civilized men, the Louisiana Conference to-day would be one of the most desirable Conferences in the connection. We believe she yet has a glorious future before her.

Early in the session a committee of five, consisting of David O. Shattuck, William R. Nicholson, James Walton, William F. Brown, and Levi Pearce, was appointed to consider and review the doings of the Louisville Convention. After deliberating five days the committee submitted an able report, approving in eulogistic terms the doings of the Convention, which, after a few verbal amendments, was adopted with a request to have it published in the *Southwestern Christian Advocate*.

We elected as our delegates to the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Green M. Rogers, Lewell Campbell, William Winans, Benjamin M. Drake, John G. Jones, Andrew T. M. Fly, and John Lane. We put down the names of the delegates in the order in which they were elected and recorded in our journal, and not as they stand on the journal of the General Conference. Some of our older delegates ran behind their usual ticket because they were suspected of being opposed to the division of the Conference. Samuel W. Speer, William H. Watkins, and Richmond Randle were elected reserve delegates. An incident occurred in connection with this election of delegates that it would be well for voters to bear in mind in writing their tickets. There were three Joneses in the Conference eligible to election. Bishop Soule forgot to tell the Conference that where there were more than one of the same name eligible to be voted for the initial letters must precede the surname or the ticket would be thrown out. The result of this omission was that a score of votes were cast with only the surname of Jones, which were thrown out as a dead loss to the Jones brotherhood. William M. Wightman would have been elected bishop in 1854 instead of 1866 had it not been for a defective ticket which made a tie, and at the next balloting he fell behind just enough to be left out. Some one, preparing his ticket in haste, had written W. M. Bishop instead of W. M. Wightman, and Bishop Soule, who was in the chair, ordered it thrown out. We believe that justice to the voter, who had inadvertently made the mistake, ought to

have suggested an arrest of the proceedings until he could identify his ticket and correct the unintentional mistake.

Toward the middle of the session the Bishop informed us of the transfer of Asbury Davidson from the Memphis to our Conference. Mr. Davidson proved to be a very valuable accession. We shall meet him hereafter filling some of our most important charges.

Rev. Charles B. Tippet, the Book Agent from New York, was very industrious during the session in his efforts to collect what was due from our preachers to the Concern. At each morning session, as soon as Conference was fairly opened, he generally urged the brethren to repair to his office in the adjoining room and settle their accounts as soon as possible. Perhaps he saw that the Southern Conferences intended to carry out the Plan of Separation in good faith, and that this was the last time a Book Agent from New York would ever visit the Mississippi Conference on a collecting tour. The writer paid no attention to his urgent and oft-repeated calls, knowing that he was innocent of any indebtedness to the New York Book Concern, until one day he sent one of the young preachers to arrest him in the Conference room and require his presence immediately in his office. We obeyed the call, supposing he wished to get some information from us about some debtor, when he with a reproving countenance, holding before our eyes a long account showing an indebtedness of about four hundred dollars, asked us why we paid no attention to his daily calls and neglected to come forward

and settle our account, as he had a right to expect from a man of our standing in the Conference? We saw his mistake at a glance and concluded not to tease him, as we had once teased Leroy Swormstedt under similar circumstances and about the same man, and told him promptly that he had been misled by a similarity of names, that the account was made out against J. I. and not J. G. Jones, the latter being the only name we used in our business transactions. "Is it possible, Brother Jones," said Mr. Tippet, "that I have been mistaken about the right man all this time? I have really felt like complaining against you for several days for what I supposed was sheer neglect on your part. I ask your pardon. Do tell me who this J. I. Jones is; and what is the prospect of ever collecting this account, now of several years' standing?" We told him the debtor had once been a member of our Conference, but was now local, and we supposed the prospect of collecting the account was not at all encouraging. We suppose Mr. Jones had ordered books both from Cincinnati and New York, and after selling them had used the money for private purposes, so that when pay day came he had not the means of paying according to promise. We must again enter our protest against this way of doing business. It is a breach of trust that no Christian ought to be guilty of to use money in our hands belonging to other parties for our own private or any other purpose. We should rather clothe ourselves in threadbare garments, live on half rations, and work at any honest trade to keep from starving than to be guilty of a practice so unchristian. When

our Publishing Houses let our preachers have books on credit, we were often deeply mortified with the tardiness with which some of them paid their accounts, and especially with those who never paid at all.

Before our Conference adjourned we solemnly passed the following resolution :

Resolved, That the last Friday in April next be set apart as a day of general fasting and prayer throughout the bounds of our Conference for the blessing of God to rest upon the deliberations of our General Conference, and that the preachers in charge be requested to publish this resolution in their Churches.

This resolution was very agreeable to our views and feelings. We desired that our people everywhere should pray earnestly that the great Head of the Church would be manifestly present at our General Conference, as it was to be the first in our separate organization, and to direct in all its deliberations and conclusions, that everything necessary might be done to preserve the Church in safety and to advance the cause of "pure and undefiled religion" in all our borders.

After a session of fourteen days, embracing two Sabbaths (the longest we ever held), the Conference adjourned December 23.

The older ministers among us had become somewhat familiar with setting off new Conferences from the old central Mississippi Conference, but still it was an affecting scene to part with those who would be embraced in the Louisiana Conference, many of whom we should see no more in the flesh. We believe there is no more affectionate and loving brotherhood

in Christendom than that of the itinerant Methodist preachers. The fellowship of mutual toil and suffering in the same blessed cause binds them to each other by the strongest cords of confidence and love, and to separate them prospectively for life is like the severance of the most endeared household. This final parting on earth, occasioned by the necessary division of Conferences, from our long-tried and greatly beloved fellow-laborers and fellow-sufferers would scarcely be bearable were it not for the blessed hope of a reunion in a brighter and sinless world when all our earthly toils and sorrows are ended. Filled with this hope, we bade our brethren of Western Louisiana an affectionate farewell at the close of our Conference.

There had been in the Bishop's Council a readjustment of the work in reference to the contemplated and expected division of the Conference. That portion intended for the Louisiana Conference was organized into four districts, respectively named New Orleans, Attakapas, Alexandria, and Monroe. Squire W. D. Chase was appointed presiding elder on the New Orleans District, John Powell on the Attakapas, William F. Brown on the Alexandria, and John N. Hamill on the Monroe. There were thirty-five pastoral charges in those four districts, consisting of stations, circuits, and colored missions, to which Baton Rouge was to be added when the division was confirmed; and nearly all of them were well supplied with effective and promising preachers, mostly comparatively young in the ministry. Including the presiding elders, the Louisiana Conference, at the start, numbered forty-one traveling

preachers, a few of whom returned ultimately to the Mississippi Conference either by transfer or location and readmission. At the end of the first year our Louisiana brethren reported fifty-seven local preachers and an aggregate membership of eight thousand one hundred and one whites and three thousand three hundred and twenty-nine colored, so that the reader will see that we gave our beloved daughter a good patrimony to commence housekeeping. Henceforth this historian will have but little to say about Western Louisiana, though it has always seemed to be a part of us. But we act under orders to write "a complete history of the Mississippi Conference," so that we must leave the history of our numerous daughters to be written by other authors. What we have written about them up to the time they were set off may be considered fully reliable, as we have kept our journal and the General Minutes constantly before us, with the additional fact that we have been personally a part of their history, so that their future historians may safely commence where we have left off. We trust, before it is too long delayed, that each of the ten Conferences organized on territory heretofore included in the Mississippi Conference (including the German Mission Conference) will at no distant day appoint a historian to write its history to a late date. The ten Conferences alluded to are the Alabama, North Alabama, North Mississippi, Louisiana, East Texas, Texas, West Texas, Northwest Texas, Trinity, and the German Mission (partly in Louisiana and Texas).

The Mississippi Conference at the division retained five districts, named Baton Rouge, Natchez,

Vicksburg, Pearl River, and Sharon, with the same presiding elder of the previous year on each. Including stations, circuits, and colored missions, we had forty-nine pastoral charges. Six of these, however, were on the western margin of the Mississippi River, and fell to the Louisiana Conference at the end of the year, with six of the seven preachers who were appointed to travel them. Including the six who were included in the Louisiana Conference on final division, we had forty-nine effective men, with the exception of one supernumerary. Our first return of statistics after the division, including the increase of this year, gave us ten thousand and ninety-five white and five thousand eight hundred and fifty-four colored members, making an aggregate of fifteen thousand nine hundred and forty-nine members to commence anew with. The number of local preachers is not given either in the journal or printed Minutes. Most of the old, experienced, and talented ministers fell to the Mississippi Conference from the fact that their families were settled in our territory.

Our General Conference at Petersburg, Va., this year perfected our separate ecclesiastical organization, and we now felt like settling down to our divinely appointed work in good earnest. Our colored missions were increasing continually in number and popularity. Many of them had become self-supporting pastoral charges. The planters began to feel that it was derogatory to their character to have their servants preached to at the expense of others, and took a laudable pride in paying their pastor well. Some of our colored charges, especial-

ly those in the valley between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, became the best-paying circuits in the Conference. Numbers of our patronizing planters were nonresidents, some members of other communions, and many not members; yet they took a praiseworthy interest in having their colored people regularly served with the gospel, and in making their moneyed arrangements always set apart a sufficient sum for the pastor of their servants. Their overseers were also instructed to make all necessary arrangements for the public service, and see that the plantation bell was duly rung at the appointed time. We now hear a vast amount of bell-ringing in some of our town and city stations to collect a congregation of from fifty to one hundred people; but in those days it was no uncommon thing for the plantation bell to call together several hundred willing and deeply interested African hearers at the usual place of worship.

We have seldom known any minister more delighted with what we called the colored work than Lowell Campbell. "Give me the negroes, if you please," he would say to the bishop; and he entered into the work with a vim. A large portion of the Vicksburg District, over which he now presided, was now made up of colored charges. Levi Pearce was this year stationed in Woodville; William H. Crenshaw, in Baton Rouge; Benjamin Jones, in Natchez; James L. Forsyth and John C. Miller, in Port Gibson and Grand Gulf; Asbury Davidson, in Vicksburg; Hayden Leavel, in Jackson; Edward Doty, in Clinton and Raymond; and John I. E. Byrd, in Yazoo City. The circuits were generally well manned and in a

safe and growing condition. Erastus R. Strickland, with James Y Griffin as his colleague, was mowing a wide swath on Bayou Pierre Circuit in the way of building churches, taking in members, and keeping things stirred generally. We always expected something extra in the way of church-building where Mr. Strickland labored. "Put up suitable places for nests," he would say, "if you wish to collect the martins. Build suitable churches in central localities, and the people will come to them."

END OF VOLUME TWO.

